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THE GRAPHIC.

AN

ILLUSTRATED

WEEKLY

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THE BALLAD OF DAME DURDEN

Dame Durden kept five serving maids
To carry the milking pail;
She also kept five lab'ring men
To use the spade and flail.

'Twas Moll and Bet, and Doll and Kate,
And Dorothy Draggletail,
And John and Dick, and Joe and Jack,
And Humphrey with his flail.

'Twas John kissed Molly, and Dick kissed Betty,
And Joe kissed Dolly, and Jack kissed Kitty,
And Dorothy Draggletail,
And Humphrey with his flail,
And Kitty was a charming maid
To carry the milking pail.



THE BALLAD OF DAME DURDEN

Dame Durden in the morn so soon
 She did begin to call;
 To rouse her servant-maids and men
 She then began to bawl.
 'Twas Moll and Bet, &c.

'Twas on the morn of Valentine,
 The birds began to prate;
 Dame Durden's servants, maids and men,
 They all began to mate.
 'Twas Moll and Bet, &c.

THE GEOGRAPHIC

AN ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY NEWSPAPER

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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 27, 1884

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A SOUDAN MIRAGE ON CHRISTMAS EVE

Topics of the Week

SOME CHRISTMAS THOUGHTS.—In spite of the changes wrought by rapidity of intercommunication, Christmas still stands chief among public holidays. At Easter, at Whitsuntide, and on the August Bank holiday, people travel for the sake of making pleasure trips; but at Christmas—when the daylight is brief, although the temperature is sometimes higher than at Easter—people stay at home, or, if they travel, travel for the sake of temporarily reuniting the parted links of the family chain. Christmas, therefore, is still, and, as far as this country is concerned, is likely to remain, the great indoor festival of the year. But it is worth remembering that there is a Greater Britain, in parts of which Christmas is kept in a different fashion. India can scarcely be reckoned in this category, for our countrymen there are rather in camp than at home. As regards the feeling of permanency of occupation, they differ in degree rather than in kind from our troops in the Soudan. When, however, we cross the Equator, and enter regions where the Southern Cross rises high in the heavens, we come upon multitudes of grown men and women whose unvarying experiences of Christmas are associated with blazing sunshine, and open-air recreations. Boating, bathing, and picknicking are the chief Yuletide pleasures, while the turkey and plum-pudding, though still offered on the domestic altar from a sense of traditional respect, seem a little out of keeping in an atmosphere teeming with mosquitoes and blue-bottle flies. But at home, at a season proverbial for its gloom, its fog, its drizzle, and its chilliness—and sometimes, but more often on Christmas cards and in Christmas stories than in actual fact, for its frost and snow—the time-honoured usages of Christmas are likely to maintain their ancient supremacy. Thus far we have only referred to the great Festival in its mundane aspect, but unless the religious significance of the anniversary is preserved it is apt to degenerate into a colourless and vulgar survival of the heathen Saturnalia. Even if we cast aside, as sceptics bid us, the miraculous accessories which have gathered round the Birth which Christians celebrate on this day, and which have delighted and thrilled, and will continue to delight and thrill, successive generations of mankind, the fact still remains that a Child was then born whose teaching and manner of life have for nearly two thousand years exercised more influence on the destinies of the world than those of any other human being. That this influence, great as it is, has been slow and imperfect, and marred by many evils, is chiefly due to the fact that His example and instructions have been perverted and neglected. Literally and energetically carried out, they would even now transform this world into a semblance of Paradise. Surely, it is no strange matter to celebrate solemnly, and yet joyfully, the Birthday of such an One as this. This may seem a trite observation, but it can scarcely be deemed unnecessary, if it be remembered that there is a large and perhaps an increasing body of persons for whom Christmas as a Christian festival is almost without significance. Yet even such persons as these are so far impressed with the especial character of this annual Birthday Feast that they instinctively feel that it is a time for good nature and good fellowship; they are disposed to be less selfish and more considerate towards others; and the commission of an atrocious crime about Christmas time seems to them doubly atrocious. This transitory access of good feeling—for too often it is only transitory—shows itself in one way which is genuinely English. As almost everybody who is in fair health and can afford the outlay eats and drinks more abundantly than usual, there is a general desire that at least on this one day of all the year the very poor and wretched should have a plentiful meal. Hence the distribution of holiday fare in workhouses and prisons. Such indulgence as this can scarcely be hurtful, and may morally be beneficial. It sheds a ray of light (feeble though it may be) on the joyless, monotonous existence of the pauper; and it should teach the malefactor that, in spite of his misdeeds, he is still a man, for whom other men have not lost all sympathy. Turning to another branch of the subject, how different is the aspect which Christmas presents as we advance from youth to age! To those children who are brought up sensibly and plainly, and who are not overdone with toys and amusements, Christmas is anticipated with the keenest delight. While we were children we scarcely realised the delight, we were too much immersed in it to observe it; but looking back upon it through the vista of years it seems to have been a fairy period. The aches, and pains, and disappointments—for there *were* disappointments, and they were very keenly felt—are forgotten, and kind Memory now only summons up the agreeable recollections. It is, however, just because these recollections are agreeable that the Christmas of the oldsters is more or less tinged with melancholy. Once more they feel "the touch of the vanished hand," once more they look around and murmur, "Where are they gone, the old familiar faces?" But in these matters, good Dame Nature, though frosty, is not altogether unkindly. She removes some beloved ones out of our sight, but she provides us with fresh beloved ones in their places. The affection which we felt for our departed parents is now transferred to our children. It is true that this consolation does not apply to married folks who are childless, or to bachelors, or to spinsters. But

such persons as these, before reaching middle age, will, if they are wise, have made such friendships that they need not feel altogether alone in the world on Christmas Day. No sensible people, however, whether childless or child-abounding, expect, when the epoch of grey hairs has set in, that Christmas will be for themselves a time of rollicking enjoyment. They take their pleasure vicariously, by ministering to or watching the enjoyment of others. Then, as we go down the hill of life, we become wonderfully pleased with things which, to the insolence of healthy Youth, may seem small mercies. We are content that we are still alive, that we have the use of our limbs, and that we can eat a piece of plum-pudding and drink a glass of port wine without imminent risk of gout and dyspepsia. And this contentment with small mercies extends itself to public affairs. Whatever be the colour of our politics, we have somehow slipped away from the youthful enthusiasm which anticipates a social or political Millennium to follow from legislative changes; we have lived through so much History that we are almost in doubt whether the world advances or recedes; if it does advance we have come to think that it advances very slowly, and we perceive clearly that as soon as one generation has slain the wicked giants whom it fondly supposed to be the sole disturbers of its peace, a fresh crop of wicked giants rises up with whom the next generation has to do battle, and that, in all probability, so it will be to the end of the chapter. The end of the chapter! That phrase suggests some serious thoughts. To us individually the chapter will close when our mortal lives come to an end. But when we are dead and gone, the world (though it is difficult to realise the fact) will still go on its way. But will it thus go on generation after generation, mechanical contrivances increasing, and population multiplying, till every corner of the earth is cleared and occupied? Judging from what the average of men now are, and how discontented with their lot they often appear, this seems but a poor sort of Millennium to anticipate. Putting aside the revelations of Scripture, it seems more probable that some day there will be a great change. It may come gradually, it may come suddenly. Such thoughts as these are disquieting, perhaps distasteful, especially if we are fairly healthy and prosperous, and satisfied that the earth should continue to spin round as it now does. But we need not fear the mighty catastrophe when it comes if, to the best of our ability, we go on quietly doing our appointed duty. This may serve for a final Christmas Thought.

DEMOCRACY IN ENGLAND.—There can be little doubt that in the political history of England the year 1884 will always be remembered as the beginning of a new era. The principle of democracy was, of course, affirmed in 1867, when the working classes in towns were admitted to the franchise; but now it has been carried to its logical consequences, and henceforth the policy of English Governments will be determined by the will of the whole people. What use will the democracy in England make of its power? That is the most important of all political questions, and it is one which cannot be very definitely answered. One thing, however, seems to be tolerably certain, and that is that what are called social questions will occupy a far more prominent place than they did for a long time after the passing of the first Reform Bill. The theory of the middle classes, speaking generally, has been that the State ought to interfere as little as possible with the natural working of economic forces. To them it has appeared almost self-evident that if life and property were adequately protected the welfare of the people would in the end be most effectually secured by unfettered competition. The working classes have never accepted this view; and to-day they reject it more decisively than at any former period. They maintain that unfettered competition means the crushing of the weak by the strong, and that the true function of the State is to create conditions which shall enable the workman to obtain a fair share of the products of his labour. It is possible that this doctrine, as held by the English working classes, may prove to be compatible with safe and steady progress; but it is also possible that there may soon be a formidable agitation for changes as great as any that have ever been accomplished in England. Mr. George's scheme has found enthusiastic supporters in Trades Union Congresses, and, whatever may be thought of it by landlords and farmers, it is not likely to be unpopular among agricultural labourers.

UNPREMEDITATED MURDER.—If Elizabeth Gibbons had been tried before a French jury she would have been acquitted, which would have been a miscarriage of justice; but it is pretty certain that her counsel at the Old Bailey could have obtained a verdict of manslaughter if he had been instructed to take another line of defence. Mrs. Gibbons was convicted on the capital charge because she persisted in the utterly untenable version that her husband had committed suicide. If she had confessed that her jealousy had been kindled, and that the altercation with her husband had roused her to frenzy—if she had acknowledged catching up the loaded revolver and firing at random the first shot (which missed), then a second, which took effect, without actual intention on her part, it would assuredly have been very difficult to disprove this version. It is possibly also the true version, and the three last shots may be accounted for by the woman's horror and reckless desperation at seeing what she had done. Arguing from these premises, a French advocate would easily have stirred a jury's compassion for "the

faithful wife of forty years, suddenly outraged in her affections," and so forth; but even an English jury might have been disposed to admit that the absence of all apparent premeditation, and the existence of at least a shadow of provocation, reduced Mrs. Gibbons's crime to manslaughter. It must be recollected that Mr. Gibbons's usual cheerful demeanour was incompatible with his having a bad wife or an unhappy home—in fact, the last person who saw him alive out of doors testified to his going home in capital spirits. It is deeply to be deplored that Mrs. Gibbons should not have told the truth before the trial. By her falsehood—the more heinous as it accused her husband of self-murder—she has estranged the public's sympathy, which would have been hers if she had come forward with a frank, penitent avowal of the deed perpetrated in a moment of aberration.

ENGLAND AND EGYPT.—The Powers are in no hurry to arrive at a decision with regard to the latest proposals of the English Government for the settlement of Egypt's financial difficulties. The scheme has been before them for some weeks; yet it is uncertain whether they have even begun to discuss it seriously. That they are acting selfishly and inconsiderately is the opinion of most Englishmen; but unfortunately England herself has committed so many mistakes in her dealings with Egypt that she cannot afford to condemn very severely the mistakes of other nations. Had we fulfilled what was our plain duty after the Battle of Tel-el-Kebir—that is, had we made ourselves directly responsible for the good government of Egypt—there would have been no need for such negotiations as those which are now going on. Under English rule the Egyptian people would soon have been prosperous and contented, and all their creditors would have been satisfied. Instead of honourably playing the part we had voluntarily undertaken, we allowed the Administration to remain in a state of confusion; and so the country became more and more wretched, until at last it was driven to the verge of bankruptcy. Even if the financial proposals of the English Government are accepted, they will not be of permanent service unless we are prepared—whether in name or not—to establish a Protectorate; for it is simply impossible for Egypt herself to reorganise her political system. It would be hard to suggest a single good reason why England should shrink from taking a step which events have rendered all but inevitable. Our supremacy would not give offence to any class of Egyptians; it would enable us to protect vital interests of our own; and it would probably be approved by all Europe, France alone excepted. France would, of course, protest against any increase of our authority; but, do what we may, we cannot hope to please her, since she insists that we ought at once to quit Egypt, and nobody in England now thinks that that is possible.

DRUNK OR SOBER?—We know how difficult it is for a policeman to believe that the unsteady soul whom he meets rolling home in the morning, and cannoning against lamp-posts on his way, has been taking nothing but a cup of cocoa. First appearances justify the scepticism of the policeman, who may be excused for not guessing at once that a man may walk in zigzag because his nervous system is out of order, or because he is recovering from a fit or other sudden ailment. It seems strange, however, that the acquaintances of the late Mr. Lotinga, money-lender, of Sunderland, were unable to determine whether he was habitually sober or the reverse. Here was a case, not of a single cursory observation, but of familiar experience extending over a period of ten years. Mr. Lotinga himself affirmed that he only drank on business—which is quite credible, for a great deal of money-lending business can be done glass in hand, and one may well believe that a man who did much of this sort of business would be more inclined for coffee and soda-water than for whisky when he got home. But the case, which a jury took eight whole days in trying, was not allowed by any of the parties to be narrowed down to the point as to whether Mr. Lotinga drank only in a professional way. On one side a number of witnesses declared that they had never seen the deceased the worse for drink; on the other a procession of people swore that they had scarcely ever seen him sober. A man cannot be habitually sober and seem drunk; nor be frequently drunk and establish a character for sobriety; so that the only conclusion to be arrived at is that there was a great deal of hard swearing in the Lotinga case. This is a matter of more public concern than the whole dispute which gave rise to the eight-day suit.

COLONIAL EXPANSION.—During the present year the Germans have made a vigorous attempt to found a Colonial Empire. The latest news is that they have established a Protectorate over the Islands of New Britain and New Ireland, the Admiralty Islands, and portions of the north coast of New Guinea; they have planted themselves firmly on the West African Coast; and it is not at all improbable that they may take possession of settlements in many other parts of the world. Active, however, as the Germans have been in the work of annexation, their designs are insignificant compared with those attributed to the French, who have lately created much uneasiness by their demands in Siam, and by the extravagance of their claims with respect to certain portions of the Basin of the Congo. It is difficult to understand the policy of France, for her population is not increasing, and there are few Frenchmen of any class who have ever shown the slightest disposition to

become colonists. Germany is in a very different position. Her population grows rapidly, and every year she sends large numbers of emigrants to America and Australia. If, therefore, she secures attractive territories across the seas, she may reasonably hope to see them occupied by her own people. England would have no reason to regret the formation of great German Colonies, but unfortunately she cannot but watch with some anxiety the development of the schemes of France. Already our trade has been injured by the irregular Franco-Chinese war; and if French relations with Siam are to be "strained," we may look for even more serious troubles. In the Congo country the object of France is apparently to prepare the way for the ruin of the International Association—a result which would render futile all the decisions of the West African Conference.

A MATTER FOR INQUIRY.—The attention of the Home Secretary ought to be called to a statement in Mr. Davitt's book as to the means employed at "C—Convict Prison" (which must mean Chatham) for detecting prisoners who are believed to be simulating lunacy. According to Mr. Davitt, a mess-tin full of filth is put into the prisoner's cell at dinner time, and if he does not eat this filth, it is assumed that he cannot be mad, and he is reported to the Governor for a flogging. Now this, if true, would be simply monstrous. Everybody having experience of the insane is aware that certain lunatics are extremely fastidious and suspicious about their food. It is only in the last stages of general paralysis, when all the senses have been nearly destroyed, or in some cases where there has been organic injury to the brain, causing a perversion of the sense of taste, that the patient will eat filth; but the patient labouring under melancholia—a very common variety of brain disease—is generally under the delusion that people are trying to poison him, and anything unusual in the taste of his food will be enough to make him turn from it. A doctor who should get a man flogged as a "shammer," because he was not mad to the point of bestiality, would therefore be exhibiting gross ignorance and committing a most brutal action. Whatever may be thought of Mr. Davitt's politics, his private character places him above any suspicion of fabricating stories to damage prison officials; so that his statements demand investigation. If substantiated, they would make it the duty of Government to take very serious action against the officials impugned; if unsupported by evidence, they should receive a prompt contradiction.

FRANCE AND GERMANY.—It was reported the other day in France that Prince Bismarck proposed to visit Paris in order to "hold colloquies with M. Ferry." Of course the German Chancellor never had any such intention; but the rumour was of some service, since the manner in which it was received afforded a pretty clear indication of the present temper of the French people. We have heard a great deal lately about the possibility of a Franco-German alliance; and had the Parisians been willing to welcome Prince Bismarck, he would have been justified in concluding that the scheme was attainable. The Parisians showed plainly, however, that it would be very unsafe for him to appear among them. The truth is that the French still hate Germany almost as bitterly as they did in 1871, and the Germans would have been very unreasonable if they had supposed that a sensitive people had already forgiven the most terrible series of humiliations ever inflicted on a great nation. Some observers are of opinion that France will never be on good terms with her neighbour as long as Alsace and Lorraine continue to be a "Reichsland." This may, perhaps, be doubted, because the inhabitants of the lost provinces are likely in the end to become loyal citizens of the German Empire, and then they will cease to excite the sympathy of the French people. But it is to be feared that for many a day France will go on dreaming about a war of revenge, and that the Germans will be safe only while they can boast of possessing an invincible army. The two Powers may be ready to act together against England, if England is foolish enough to offend both; but during the lifetime of the present generation that will not mean that they have advanced a step towards a cordial reconciliation.

ECCENTRIC ADVERTISEMENTS.—There is a difference between methods of puffery which are painfully offensive—like that of the coffins which has raised such an outcry—and those which are simply startling and tiresome. Neither sort are peculiar to this century, for the inscriptions found on the walls of Pompeii show that the ancients understood pretty well how to vaunt their wares; in fact, considering the various appliances now at the service of advertisers, it is rather surprising that puffery as a fine art should have made so little progress. Processions of men oddly dressed form a very old device for attracting customers; and just a hundred and two years ago a grocer in the Strand sent "six chained negroes" crying "Cheap Sugar" from Temple Bar to Charing Cross, till a kind-hearted member of the Abolition Society stopped the squad, and exhorted them to come with him to Bow Street, and prefer a charge against the man who dared to keep poor blacks chained on British soil. It then turned out that only one of the niggers was genuine, the others being cork-blackened. Not long after this a wig-maker—the wig trade was on the decline just then—had recourse to a style of advertisement which would seem outrageous to the taste of these times. From his door in St. Martin's Lane started a

long funeral procession, the coachmen, mutes, and mourners of which all wore wigs of different kinds, while the pall on the hearse bore the inscription: "The dead body of a good old Fashion." Vulgar as some modern advertisements are, there is such an improvement in public taste that charlatans are promptly warned when they have transgressed decent limits; and it must be noticed that objectionable advertisements are never of very long life. Among thoroughly objectionable ones, by the by, must be classed those printed to resemble the police notices which offer pecuniary rewards. Scotland Yard ought to have some copyright in the form of its notices, for a reader who has been once tricked by a sham police poster, which proves to be a playbill, is likely to pass over real ones for some time afterwards. Could not Scotland Yard register a trade-mark?

NOTICE.—With this week is issued an EXTRA TWO-PAGE COLOURED SUPPLEMENT, entitled "THE BALLAD OF DAME DURDEN."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—The Editor will endeavour, as far as lies in his power, to return to the senders, or to any address which they may indicate, all Sketches, whether used for purposes of illustration or not, and all rejected MSS. (for the transmission of these latter postage stamps must be enclosed); but at the same time he wishes it to be clearly understood that, although every possible care will be taken of such Sketches or MSS., he declines to accept any responsibility in the event of their being mislaid or lost.

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PRINCESS'S THEATRE.—Mr. WILSON BARRETT, Lessee and Manager.—HAMLET Every Evening at 7.45. Messrs. Wilson Barrett, Speakman, Dewhurst, Willard, Clifford Cooper, Frank Cooper, Crauford, Hudson, Doone, De Solla, Elliott, Evans, Fulton, Foss, &c., and George Barrett; Mesdames Eastlake, Dickens, &c., and M. Leighton. Doors open 7.15. Carriages at 11.15. Box Office 8.30 till 5. No fees. Business Manager, Mr. J. H. COBBE.

BRITANNIA THEATRE, Hoxton.—Sole Proprietress, Mrs. S. LANE.—On Boxing Day at 12 o'clock, and Every Evening at 7. Grand Christmas Pantomime, by Mr. F. Bowyer, entitled KING KOOKOO. Mrs. S. Lane, Misses Elsie Phyllis, Lily Willford, Nellie Davis, Frances Talbot, Kate Floretta, Blanche Kanson. The great G. H. Chirgwin; Messrs. Sam Ranson, Fred Lay, George Lewis, Newbould, Bigwood, Drayton, Laurence, and Tom Lovell. Grand Comic Harlequinade. Morning Performances Saturday, Dec. 27, Monday, Dec. 29, Thursday, Jan. 1, and Every Monday at 1 o'clock, to which Children half-price under Twelve.

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ALFRED W. FRIPP, R.W.S., Secretary.

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A CHRISTMAS EVE MIRAGE IN THE SOUDAN

OUR artist has depicted the tortures of a modern Tantalus. Lying in his tent in the advanced posts of our Expedition, weary with the sweltering heat, and pestered with myriads of those true plagues of Egypt, the flies, the most patient British warrior is at times wont to fall a prey to an attack of home sickness. Particularly so, at this festive period of the year, when family circles at home are wont to be gathered together, and stray members flock in from all sides to join in celebrating right merrily this season of "Peace and goodwill." Little of either peace and goodwill, however, does our exile in the Soudan feel on this Christmas Eve, as the combined effects of the Egyptian climate and his own irritated brain raise a tantalising mirage in the cloud of smoke which he is vigorously puffing out from the only friend he did not leave behind—his pipe. This after various dissolving views resolves itself into a familiar home scene and familiar home faces—the Christmas decoration task in which he has so often taken part, in company with the damsel whom his fancy has conjured up. Then, as he muses on the proverbial fickleness of woman and on the wiles of hated rivals left behind, his thoughts become more gloomy, and mayhap he breaks out into verse, concluding something after the style of the following stanzas, with which the artist has obligingly supplied us:—

Time works changes in all, I fear,
And she—the figure in white and grey—
Will she keep the tryst through a single year,
Or, as many another has, fall away?
But I may not hope while banished here
Two thousand miles away.

My heart is aching with this lay
As I dream of that old-time home,
Sadder it comes from day to day
As perhaps forgotten I roam.
May be for years I am doomed to stay,
Or lose my life from fever or fray,
Two thousand miles away.

COLONEL GUNTER, M.P.

THE death of Mr. Thomas Collins, M.P. for Knaresborough—whose quaint humour was highly appreciated in the House of Commons during the earlier days of his occupancy of the seat—caused a vacancy in that borough. A contested election followed, the result of which was that Colonel Gunter (C) received 319 votes, and Mr. A. Holden (L) 267.

Colonel Robert Gunter, of The Grange, Wetherby, Yorkshire, and Earl's Court, South Kensington, is the eldest son of the late Mr. Robert Gunter, of Earl's Court, by Fanny, daughter of Mr. William Thompson, of Durham. He was born in November, 1831, was educated at Rugby, and entered the 4th Dragoon Guards in 1851. He served in that regiment for twelve years, taking part in the Crimean campaign, and retiring with the rank of Captain. Since March, 1871, he has been Colonel commandant of the 3rd Princess of Wales' Own (Yorkshire Regiment) Infantry Militia. He is a J.P. for the West Riding. In 1862 he married Jane Marguerite, eldest daughter of Mr. Thomas Benyon, of Gledhow Hall, Yorkshire.—Our portrait is from a photograph by R. L. Graham, Leamington.

JULES BASTIEN-LEPAGE

FRENCH ART has sustained a severe loss by the untimely death of this talented young painter, whose productions for the past nine years have formed one of the leading attractions of the Salon, and who had been looked upon as likely to become a modern master of the first rank. Thoroughly independent in his treatment of his subject—whether in the portrayal of a peasant gathering potatoes or in his portraits, such, for instance, as that of Sarah Bernhardt—he never failed to impress the eye with a sense of singular force and originality. Bastien-Lepage was a true artist, working laboriously at the minutest details, frequently rubbing out the previous day's work, and tiring out his sitters from the length and number of times he wished them to pose for him. Indeed, it was owing to this that he was unable to paint the portrait of Victor Hugo—a task on which he had set his mind, but was compelled to abandon, as the veteran poet was not equal to the strain of giving as many sittings as the painter needed. Bastien-Lepage was born in 1848, and was at first a Government clerk at Damvilliers. After a very few months' work, however, he felt Art was his true vocation, and at the age of nineteen he went to Paris and entered Cabanel's studio, where he worked long and laboriously. It was not, indeed, till 1873 that he exhibited at the Salon—his first picture being entitled "Au Printemps," the following year he gained a medal of the third class for his "Chanson du Printemps," but in 1875 his marvellous "Portrait de Mon Grandpère" obtained the Prix du Rome, and thenceforward he was looked upon as one of the most promising artists of the day. His pictures all more or less dealt with the pains and pleasures of the humbler classes, whose characteristics he treated with marvellous fidelity, his "Potato Gatherer," a peasant working in the field, being reckoned by many his masterpiece. As we have said, Lepage was an artist pure and simple. He worked from pure love of Art and not for gain, and no sooner had he a little money in hand than he would leave Paris, and go and look for subjects in the fields or woods. He also paid one visit to London, during which he made numerous striking studies of riverside life, and these, with his most noteworthy paintings, are well known on this side of the Channel. Amongst the portraits he painted were those of the Prince of Wales, of Sarah Bernhardt, and of M. Albert Wolff, the Parisian critic. For the past ten months the young artist had been suffering from a tumour in the stomach, and had been compelled to abandon all work. A trip to Algeria failed to give him strength, and, returning to Paris, he died on the 10th inst.—Our portrait is from a photograph by Dagron, 34, Boulevard Nouvelle, Paris.

FAIR AT POKHAR, INDIA

POKHAR, or, according to the old spelling Pushkar, in Ajmere District, Rajputana, is under English Government. Brahma here performed the sacrifice known as "Yagna," whereby the Lake of Pushkara became so holy that the greatest sinner by bathing in it earned the delights of Paradise.

The lake is surrounded by temples, but they are all of modern construction, the old buildings having been destroyed more or less by Aurangzeb.

Bathing ghâts line the lake, and most of the princely families of Rajputana have houses round the margin.

No living thing may be put to death within the limits of the town. Annually there is a great fair in October and November, attended by about 100,000 pilgrims, who bathe in the sacred lake. A large trade is carried on at that time in horses, camels, bullocks, and miscellaneous merchandise.

Pokhar is about eight miles from Ajmere, and the road winds over the hills and through deep cuttings, in some places rather dangerous, especially, as seen in the picture, with a jibbing mare.

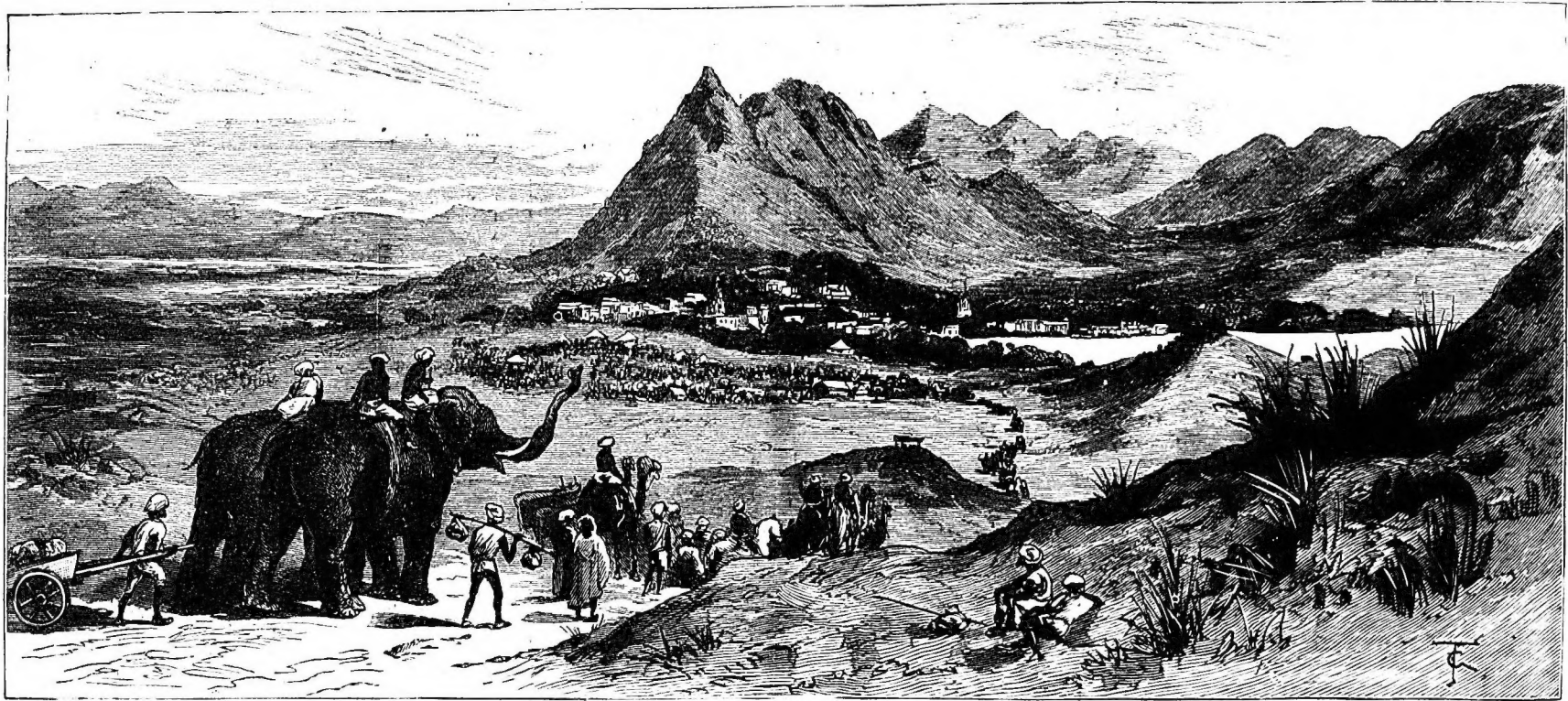
The whole road is one stream of pilgrims, horses, cattle, and camels, and if a block takes place in the "Pass" it is hopeless to expect to move for some time.



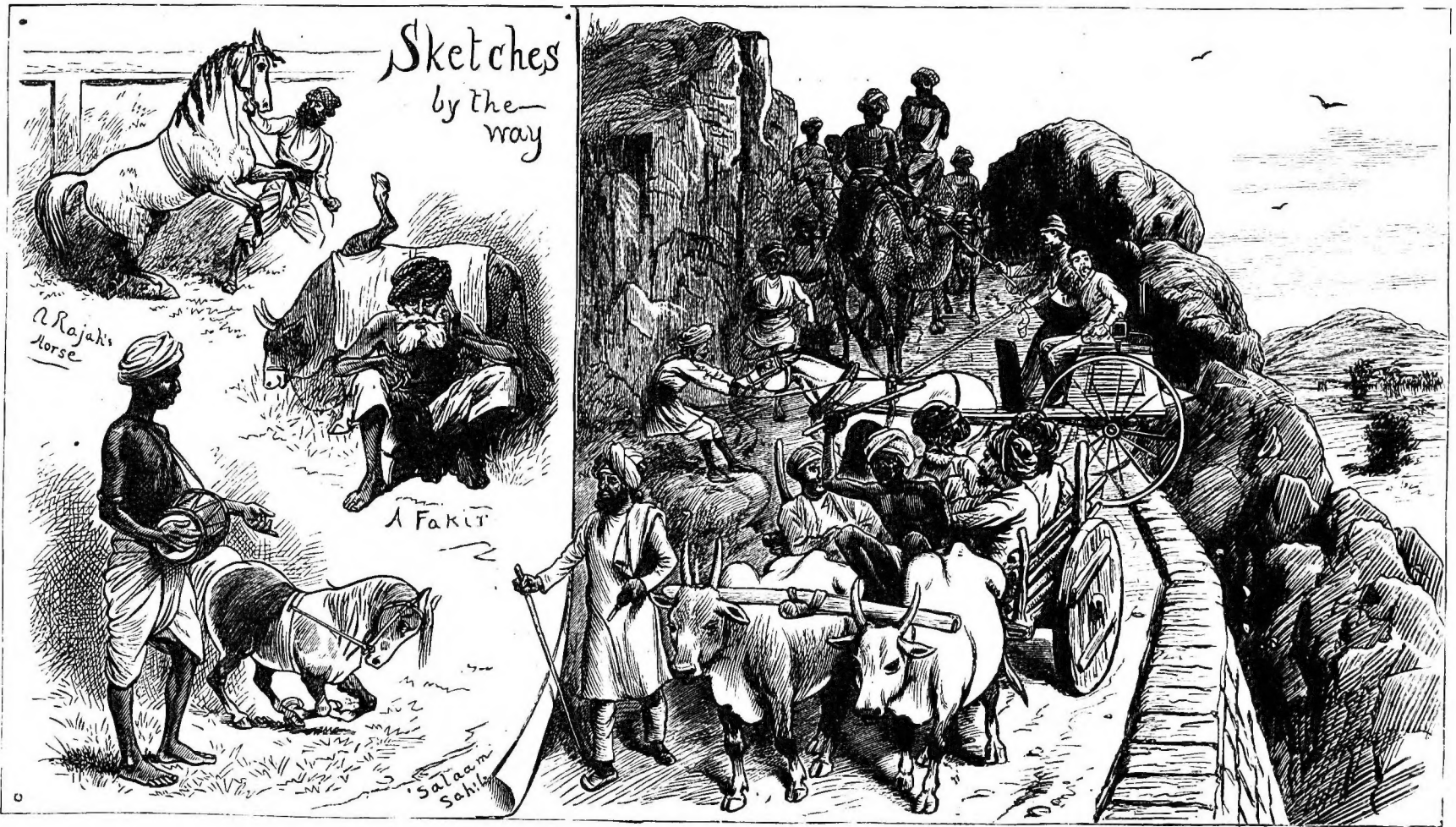
COLONEL ROBERT GUNTER
New Conservative M.P. for Knaresborough



JULES BASTIEN-LEPAGE
French Painter. Born Nov. 1, 1848. Died Dec. 10, 1884



THE FAIR SEEN FROM A DISTANCE



GOING TO THE FAIR
HORSE, CAMEL, AND BULLOCK FAIR AT POKHAR, RAJPUTANA, INDIA



CHRISTMAS GREETINGS BY THE ENGLISH MAIL



GATHERING CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS

CHRISTMAS IN SOUTHERN INDIA

The population of Pokhar is only about 4,000 persons, chiefly Brahmins.—Our engravings are from sketches by Major E. M. Alexander, Seaforth Highlanders.

CHRISTMAS IN SOUTHERN INDIA

"CHRISTMAS CARDS."—This engraving represents the arrival of the post at Christmas time in an up-country house in Southern India. The two ladies have gone to the steps of the verandah to receive the Christmas cards, letters, and packets which have come by the English mail. In outward aspect the postman is very unlike his British fellow-citizen. He has a brown face, large turban, long white calico coat, and a black or red official belt, on which is a brass plate and inscription. This plate is worn from the shoulder across the chest, and held in place by the large many-folded crimson handkerchief which he winds round him. One touch of nature makes all postmen kin throughout the Empire. This Oriental letter-carrier, like his Western brethren, is asking the ladies for a Christmas box, which he will surely get, for he is a hard-worked, responsible, and poorly-paid public servant.

"GATHERING CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS."—In England, those who possess ample gardens, pleasure-grounds, and conservatories may cull their floral ornaments for Yule-tide from their own homesteads; but the majority of us are dependent on markets or peripatetic vendors for such decorations. In the tropics there is no nipping winter, and therefore the necessity of Christmas decorations is made the excuse for a pleasant jaunt to the woodlands, where the coffee-plant, with its bright-red berries, forms an excellent substitute for the holly; while tall tree-ferns, feathery grasses, and leaves of every shade from green to crimson, make up a bouquet far surpassing any Christmas show of flowers and foliage in the gloomy North. Nevertheless, the Anglo-Indian exile would willingly sacrifice all this tropical luxuriance for the leaden sky and chilling snow of a December day in the Old Country home.—Our engravings are from sketches by Mrs. Munro, Peer Merde, Travancore.

THE SECOND CATARACT

THE Second Cataract on the Nile, which extends from Wady Halfa to Sarass, is more extensive than the First Cataract, being a succession of rapids, as the river there is studded with palm-fringed islets and huge masses of black shining stone. "Some travellers," recently wrote a correspondent, "have described these rocks as granite, others as detached fragments of a basaltic formation. In reality they are neither, but rather an imperfect porphyry, rounded and blackened by the action of water. There are deep holes in most of them which could only have been hollowed by the rush and swirl of a swift torrent. The prevailing colour is a curious bluish black, with an underglow of red, like the rich tint of a northern Nubian's skin. Where some rude force has fractured these rocks, one discovers the cause of this peculiar hue. Mainly the formation is greenish, of compact grain, with laminae of mica interspersed irregularly. Near the surface is a layer of red oxide, and over that a thin coating of black. . . . There are huge rocks in mid-channel, and around these the waters sweep in a strong whirlpool." One of the chief obstacles to the navigation of this Cataract is the great gate, or gut, called Bab-el-Kebir, and the labour of towing a nuggar through, or rather over, this waterfall was recently illustrated by our special artist, Mr. F. Villiers, in these pages. The fall is occasioned by the water rushing from a large basin at the head through a narrow channel into a smaller pool below.

Fortunately a short line of railway runs along the bank from Wady Halfa to Sarass, a distance of thirty miles, and this was used to transport the heavy stores past the Cataract to smooth water. The nuggars and whale-boats were mainly able to ascend the rapids. They were unloaded, however, and, as we have said, their stores sent by rail to Sarass, there to be again taken on board. The numerous islets served as vantage-ground to fix the blocks for the towing hawsers, and, thanks to them and the skilful piloting of the Canadian voyageurs, very few accidents took place.—Our engraving is from a photograph kindly forwarded by Mr. Alexander Macdonald.

THE AFGHAN BOUNDARY COMMISSION

THESE sketches were taken by a member of the Indian Section of the Afghan Boundary Commission, which, under Colonel Ridgeway, recently joined forces with the European portion, under Sir Peter Lumsden, and is now wintering at Bala Murghab, previously to beginning work in the spring, when the Russian Commissioner may be expected to arrive. Meanwhile the delay is said to be neither accidental nor unavoidable, and moreover stories are circulated to the effect that Colonel Ali Khanoff and his officers, who are on the spot, are treating the British officers with marked discourtesy. Most of the sketches, which were taken on the march from Quetta to the Helmund, explain themselves. With regard to the other the artist writes:—

"Kala-i-Fateh was evidently an important place at one time, and the ruined mud fortifications are still of great extent. It is on the banks of the Helmund, and was about the last place where we camped on that river, which not long afterwards loses itself ignominiously in a vast mud-hole.

"The village represented rejoiced in the name of 'King.' The number of spectators on the roofs was due, I think, to the presence of the Mission."

GRACE DARLING'S MONUMENT

GRACE DARLING was the daughter of William Darling, keeper of the lighthouse on the Longstone Rock, one of the Farne Islands, off the coast of Northumberland. She was born at Bamborough about 1816, and distinguished herself by the heroism with which she rescued the nine survivors of the crew and passengers of the *Forfarshire* steamship, when it struck on the Hawkers Rocks, on the night of the 5th September, 1838. A subscription was raised for her benefit, her name was on every tongue, and her portraits were eagerly sought after. But Grace was not spoiled by her sudden popularity. She lived on, in her simple, graceful way, loving and beloved, till consumption carried her off, October 20th, 1842. She was buried in Bamborough Churchyard, where a monument was erected to her memory. Her heroic deed was celebrated by Wordsworth in some noble lines, and a lifeboat bearing her name was presented to Holy Island. Her father, a remarkably handsome man, survived till he was nearly eighty, dying in 1865. He is buried by the side of his daughter. Grace Darling's monument is much out of repair, and the Rev. A. O. Medd, the Vicar of Bamborough, will gladly receive donations for restoring it.—Our engraving is from a photograph by William Green, Berwick-upon-Tweed.

BAMBOROUGH CASTLE

ABOUT five miles eastward of Belford, in the county of Northumberland, upon an almost perpendicular rock overlooking the sea, and about 150 feet above its level, stands the Castle of Bamborough, in past ages a fortress of might, and in our own a house of charity. A stately tower, the only original part of this once famous stronghold, was built on the remains of a Roman fortress. During the Anglo-Saxon period, and the warlike days which followed almost up to the end of the seventeenth century, this castle was on various occasions besieged, taken, and retaken. In 1720, Nathaniel, Lord Crewe, Bishop of Durham, who had purchased the manor on which the castle stood, bequeathed it for charitable purposes. In 1757, important repairs, which have since been continued, were begun

through the munificence of Dr. Sharpe, one of the trustees of the estate. A number of boys and girls are lodged, clothed, and educated there, there is an infirmary in which 1,000 persons are annually received, thirty beds are kept for shipwrecked sailors, tackle is provided for raising sunken vessels, and the castle is used as a signal station for giving notice to the fishermen of Holy Island of vessels in distress. To sailors on that perilous coast, Bamborough Castle is what the Convent of St. Bernard is to the traveller in the Alps.—Our engraving is from a photograph by William Green, Berwick-upon-Tweed.

SLEDGE RACES AT MOSCOW

THESE races take place every Sunday from January to the end of March, and are naturally the resort of crowds of all classes. Indeed, one of the most interesting features of the races is the procession to and from the course of the more aristocratic members of society, when the wealth displayed in horseflesh and magnificent furs is particularly striking. Everybody in Moscow who can afford it secures a good trotter, and the fast driving which prevails would not be permitted in any other but a Russian town. In the sketch, the rider is galloping alternately before and behind the racing trotter in the sledge, so as to stimulate the animal as much as possible, and is shouting at him to do his best. This generally takes place towards the close of the race, when the last spurt is being put on. The two competing sledges start from opposite sides of the course in front of the tribune.

LONDON OUT-BOARDERS

VERY few people would without hesitation accept the declaration that the peripatetic mediums for advertisements who are known as "sandwich men" are to be included among the attractions of the great West End thoroughfares, but it can scarcely be denied that they frequently form an important element in the humour of the ceaseless changeable traffic of the main streets. More than this, they each represent a fragment of a London Directory which he who runs may read. To a reflecting mind, however, the announcements which these poor heralds bear upon their wooden tabards are often suggestive of painful thoughts. The sunken cheek and hungry eye of the bearer of a placard concerning a "Food Exhibition," or intimating where a sumptuous dinner may be obtained; the fluttering rags and broken shoes of the old man who battles with the searching wind that he may keep the subject of warm clothing before the public eye; the rueful countenances of the long line of poverty-stricken creatures who shuffle in the gutter to call attention to a roaring farce, or a gay burlesque, may sometimes make us pause to ask: Where do these itinerants come from, and how do they live? The first question may easily be answered. Some of them live in those sordid neighbourhoods that often lie so close to the haunts of rank and fashion, or further away in Whitechapel, Southwark, Bermondsey, and about the Waterloo Road. Many of them are incapable of undertaking the work of labourers, and know that it would be useless to seek the precarious fourpence an hour for which so many of the able-bodied wait in vain at the gates of the London and St. Katharine Docks. Yet let no one imagine that it is easy work to shamble along from nine o'clock in the morning till the gas is lighted in the streets, bearing these boards upon the shoulders, and keeping a slow even pace at the edge of the kerbstone, when the wind is sweeping in fierce, freezing gusts, or the sun is melting the asphalt.

There used to be a grim jest that each of the sandwich men received "a shilling a day and his board." As a matter of fact, the ordinary regulation pay is fourteen-pence a day, and though occasionally the wages may rise to eighteen-pence when a grotesque mask, a false nose, or a costume provocative of derisive aggressions by the juvenile populace has to be worn, fourteen-pence is the market value of a boardman's day. The largest company of this queer ragged regiment may be seen by the curious inquirer at about half-past seven in the morning crowded about the entrance to a place named Ham Yard, near Tottenham Court Road, for it is there that the principal contractor for board advertisements has his office. Here the men "get between the shutters," and are led off in contingents to the districts where they will walk their round, and hither they return at night to give up the burden that has galled their shoulders and rubbed their blade-bones, and to receive the day's pay.

It would be a poor tale to tell how many of them live; for unless there is a parish loaf and parish coals, or such aid as may be given by charitable missions, there can be no home, unless the earnings of a wife can aid to keep some semblance of a home. Probably the larger number of boardmen sleep at the common lodging-houses, and begin the day with a three half-penny breakfast at a coffee-stall—if indeed they break their fast before the mid-day halt is called for half-an-hour, that they may lay aside their harness and seek some chosen by-street where there is a wall against which to sit or lean as they munch their bread and dripping, or indulge in the high-spiced luxury of a saveloy. The accustomed wayfarer in the Strand at noon will have seen one large contingent of these poor fellows seated on the stone coping of the dwarf wall which supports the iron railings at the flank of the church of St. Mary-le-Strand. It is a less melancholy *al fresco* luncheon than might be imagined, if the weather be genial, and only a light wind stirring, and then the more fortunate of the ragged regiment may have an occasional visitor—wife or daughter, who brings something in a bason. Let us not inquire too closely how little it is—if in quantity and quality it bear any proportion to fourteen-pence a day.

DAME DURDEN

THESE pictures are sufficiently explained by the verses.

THE GOLF LINKS AT PAU, FRANCE

PAU can scarcely be called a winter resort in the sense that those persons who go there will escape the chills of winter, for the mean temperature of the season is only 41 deg. Fahrenheit, and wet, cloudy skies are common; but, on the other hand, the climate possesses remarkably sedative qualities, there is a notable absence of wind, and the town is surrounded by numerous beautiful walks and drives, an attraction not possessed by all the Mediterranean health-resorts.

Perhaps it is owing to the calmness of the atmosphere that the game of golf—despite its Caledonian origin—has taken firm root in Pau, of course among visitors hailing from these islands.

The course is described as one of the best inland courses existing. It has nine holes, and is played twice over in competitions.

Our engraving is from a photograph by Major Hopkins of a large tapestry painting by Major Shortspoon, which was recently on show at Messrs. Dickinson's, in Bond Street, but has now been transferred to the English Club at Pau.

The figures are likenesses of the principal players, which are named from the left of the picture: Mr. Foster Barham, Secretary, Mr. John Stewart, Mr. Fairbairn, Mr. A. Drysdale, Colonel Bannatyne, Sir Victor Brooke, Bart., Mr. M. Post, Mr. Mayhew, Mr. Grant Henry, Mr. Macnab, Mr. Leslie Stephen, Mr. Wright, Mr. A. Post, Mr. Hutchison, Mr. H. Houldsworth, Sir H. Williamson, Bart., Mr. Ritchie, Lord David Kennedy, Pascal (professional), Colonel Buscarlet, Captain Stephen, Colonel Naylor Leyland, Mr. Armar Corry, Colonel Kennard, M.P., and Sir John St. Aubyn, Bart., M.P.; Mr. Arthur Post has since died.

The snow hills in the background are the Pyrenees. The beautiful stream, the Gave, runs along one side of the course. Pau itself is a mile and a half to the left.

CANNES

CANNES forms a pleasant residence. It is partially sheltered on the north-west by the Esterel Mountains, but is open towards the east and south—towards the morning sun. The larger portion of the town is composed of handsome hotels and elegant villas, which extend along the shore. As far as our countrymen are concerned, Lord Brougham may be said to have discovered Cannes. He spent most of his later days there, and died in 1868, aged ninety. His mortal remains lie in the new cemetery, and over them is erected a monument, consisting of a massive lofty cross, on a double basement. The season at Cannes begins in October and ends in May. The climate is dry and stimulating. The mean winter temperature is 47° Fahrenheit, but this does not indicate the brightness and warmth of the sun during the daytime. One of the many agreeable excursions from Cannes is made by the small steamer to the Island of St. Marguerite, which is nearly covered with a pine forest, except at Point Croisette, where there is a fort, in which the Man with the Iron Mask was confined. This island is in some danger of being parcelled out by building speculators, and one of the Duke of Albany's last acts was to protest against this threatened Vandalism. The Island of St. Honorat is inhabited by some monks of the Order of St. Francis.—Our engraving is from a drawing by H. Pilleau.

MAC VERE DE VERE'S CHRISTMAS JOURNEY

THESE engravings depict—with perhaps just a touch of humorous exaggeration—the hardships which even in these luxurious days are likely to befall a visitor to the Scottish Highlands during the winter season. The first part of the journey from London is easy and pleasant enough. But when a man quits the Pullman for his troubles begin. The difference would surprise those numerous tourists who only know the Highlands during the summer months. Then, thanks to the carefully-adjusted system of David McBrayne's line of steamers, aided by coaches run both by them and by many other proprietors, one may travel over the greater part of the Highlands not only comfortably but luxuriously. But during the winter matters are very different. Steamers do not start every day for everywhere, and rounding the "Moll" (or Mull of Cantyre) is usually a stormy experience. The duration of the passage, therefore, is uncertain, and consequently if the traveller has to get somewhere in order to join another boat by a certain time, and "misses connections," he may be detained a couple of days waiting for conveyance. The hotels are in many districts practically closed, the coaches are laid up, the horses are sent to Glasgow and other towns for sale (a fresh lot being purchased next season), and so even a "ponyney" may be unattainable. A friend of our artist's was glad on one occasion to make use of a mourning coach returning from the funeral of some grandee. To travellers coming from Glasgow the Oban Railway now saves rounding the "Moll" to many places; but it has only been open a year or two. The rest of the sketches speak for themselves.

OUR ARTIST SHIPWRECKED ON THE NILE.—We have received a telegram from our special artist, Mr. F. Villiers, stating that he has been shipwrecked on the Nile through the capsizing of his boat. Mr. Charles Williams, of the *Daily Chronicle*, who was with him, telegraphs on Friday evening from Korti to that journal the following account of the accident:—"I arrived here this evening in company with the special artist of the *Graphic*, after a somewhat eventful voyage from Debbeh in the little whaler which I brought from England. Under ordinary circumstances the Nile from Dongola to Korti is comparatively easy of navigation—at least, so we were informed at Dongola; but such has not been our experience. We had much worry, owing chiefly to the shifting sandbanks, the movements of which at this season are always uncertain, and are this year, we learn, unusually eccentric. We had, in consequence, several narrow escapes of coming to grief, culminating twenty miles north of this place in actual peril. Approaching a notoriously difficult reach, we found ourselves in abnormally deep water, with a current against which it seemed almost impossible to make headway, even with a good wind. Soon the river became shallower, with dangerous cross-currents and eddies, bringing us to a complete standstill. We resolved to tow the short distance separating us from safe water. Our men had scarcely commenced tugging at the tow-lines when the fierce cross-currents caught the little boat, and turned her almost keel upwards. We struggled desperately to right her, and our efforts, thanks to the admirable build of the boat, were successful. We were congratulating ourselves upon our narrow escape, when a warning cry came from the bank, and at the same moment I felt a sort of wrench. In another instant the boat was turned over as neatly and as quickly as a tossed pancake. Entangled in the boat-gear, and encumbered by our heavy clothing, we were powerless to battle with the swiftly-running stream, and it would have gone hard with us had not the *Inflexible's* pinnace promptly come to our rescue. As it was, the mishap was sufficiently serious. Scarcely any of the boat-gear was recovered, and all our stores, reserve clothing, money, &c., were irretrievably lost."



RESPONDING TO THE TOAST OF THE ARMY at the banquet on Monday in celebration of the sixcentenary of Peterhouse, the oldest collegiate institution of the University of Cambridge, Lord Hartington said that Lord Wolsley wrote and telegraphed in a cheerful and hopeful strain, although he did not speak too confidently about the prospects of so novel an enterprise as that in which he and his troops were engaged.

MR. J. J. THOMSON, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, was elected on Monday Cavendish Professor of Experimental Physics in succession to Lord Rayleigh. Mr. Thomson is a Manchester man, and a former alumnus of Owens College.

THE DESIRABILITY OF A RETURN TO PROTECTION having been mooted at several recent agricultural and other meetings, Mr. Gladstone has thought it expedient to say, in reply to a memorial from the Norfolk Chamber of Agriculture asking for an official inquiry into the present condition of agriculture, that he cannot hold out any hope of compliance with the request for such an inquiry, "unless it can be shown that it would not do mischief to the cultivators of the soil by encouraging expectations not likely to be realised."

A BRISK CORRESPONDENCE on the merits and demerits of proportional representation is proceeding in the newspapers. Mr. Leonard Courtney has been advocating it at meetings of miners in Northumberland, and adding to his former arguments one founded on the view that the single-member system will leave the loyal Protestants and Catholics of Ireland without anything worth the name of Parliamentary representation.

AMONG THE FEW SPEECHES delivered by members of the last Conservative Cabinet since the compromise have been those of Colonel Stanley and Sir Richard Cross at Chorley on Monday, and of Lord John Manners at Syston, where, while expressing his approval of the principle of proportional representation, he said

THE MONSTER INLAND SEA lately discovered in Canada has now been formally explored by an expedition from the Quebec Geographical Society, who received the first news of the lake's existence. At first the newly-found body of water was believed to be identical with a small lake named Mistassini, or Mistassimni, about 300 miles directly north of Quebec, but the expedition proves that it is completely distinct, and is an expansion of the St. Lawrence. The New York *Christian Union* states that Mr. Bignell, the leader of the expedition, sailed for seven days on the lake, noting deep and numerous bays and inlets and beautiful islands; while, though he travelled 120 miles, he did not reach the widest portion of the waters. Fish swarm in the lake, fur-bearing animals abound on the shores, and the surrounding lands are well wooded and partly arable. Now a surveying party have settled in the district to complete the exploration, and there is already talk of laying a railway to Quebec. It is asserted that the Hudson's Bay Company have known of this lake for over a century, but kept the secret, lest their monopoly of the trade should be injured.

The earliest production of the new year which has any serious claim to notice was Mr. Pinero's comedy, with the title of *Low Water*, brought out at the GLOBE. The later pieces of this gentleman have not sustained the promise of his earlier work. The story man have not sustained the promise of his earlier work. The story man have not sustained the promise of his earlier work. The story man have not sustained the promise of his earlier work.



THE SECOND CATARACT OF THE NILE
FROM A PHOTOGRAPH



THE EXPEDITION IN EGYPT is gradually being concentrated at Korti, where the British seem to be received with friendliness by the natives, who crowd into the camp with all manner of provisions. The whaleboats with the troops are arriving somewhat slowly, as, owing to the low Nile and the shifting of the sands, the navigation is daily becoming more difficult. One of the boats was capsized some seventeen miles below Korti, but all the occupants were saved. Our artist and the correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle* were amongst those on board. Lord Wolseley has been visiting the outposts, and superintending some experiments which the Engineers have been making for felling trees with gun-cotton, so as to provide fuel for the steamers as quickly as possible. Following his usual plan of rewarding those natives who have done good service to the Expedition, he has decorated the Vakeel of Merawi with the Medjidieh. At Cairo Nubar Pasha has replied to the demand of Germany and Russia that they should be represented on the Debt Commission by shifting the responsibility of such a step upon the shoulders of the Powers. Of course if the latter consent Egypt assures the applicant that she will have no possible objection. With regard to the main question of the final settlement of Egypt and her financial and administrative difficulties there is nothing fresh to record. Europe is still ruminating over the English proposals, and waiting for M. Ferry to make the next move.

GERMANY has been sympathising with Prince Bismarck. The petty conduct of the Reichstag majority in refusing him an assistant in the Foreign Office is strongly stigmatised as unpatriotic and paltry, and telegrams of condolence and encouragement have poured in from every part of the Empire. Indeed it is not at all improbable that on the third reading of the Budget the item will be restored, so great is the popular indignation at the unreasonable method which the Clericals and Liberals have adopted of venting their spite upon a statesman who, with all his faults, has rendered enormous services to his country as the head of that department in which they refuse him assistance now that his strength is failing him. Prince Bismarck has addressed a letter of thanks to his sympathisers, declaring that "In the demonstration of the national feeling which pervades the people I find encouragement even with my failing strength to persist in the struggle against parties whose dissension among themselves, and unanimity against all guidance from the Government, are impeding the development of the Empire, and endangering the unity bought by the nation with so many sacrifices and struggles." The Prince is said to be in ill-health, and proposes to take a short holiday abroad in warmer climes. This has given rise to the rumour that he intended to visit Paris.

The West African Conference has adjourned until January 5th, having got on very little further with its task. Several minor points have been discussed, and a resolution has been passed declaring that it is desirable that some understanding should be come to between the Powers in order to protect the natives against the evils ensuing on the abuse of strong drink "in a manner which shall reconcile the rights of humanity with the legitimate interests of trade," if indeed such a reconciliation is possible. The American proposition for neutralising the Congo Free State Territory has been adjourned owing to the determined opposition of France, while the question of the future form of annexation has not yet been brought forward, nor has the burning question of Sovereignty been in any way mooted. Indeed, there are not wanting rumours to the effect that new difficulties have arisen with regard to the rival claims of France and the International Association in the Congo region, the right to the south side of Stanley Pool being warmly contested by both. The French assert that the chiefs of that district are mere subjects of the King with whom M. de Brazza concluded his Treaty, while the Association claims that they are entirely independent, and competent to make treaties for themselves. Prince Bismarck, however, is showing his wisdom in getting all great questions practically settled before bringing them before the Conference. The dynamite trial was concluded on Monday; Reinsdorf, Rupsch, and Küchler being condemned to death, Holzauer and Bachman to ten years' imprisonment, Reinbach, Söhngen, and Töllner being acquitted.

In FRANCE the Budget has been definitively passed, and the Chamber adjourned on Saturday for the Christmas holidays. Political circles are consequently delightfully quiet, although there are still journalistic outbursts against England and her Egyptian proposals. There has also been much discussion over the revelations which have been made of the high-handed way in which M. Thomson, the Governor of Cochin China, forced King Norodom of Cambodia to sign the treaty placing his country under French protection. The King has protested to M. Grévy through a French merchant, but this will probably avail him little, the general opinion being that of the *Soir*, which says that it would be puerile to reproach M. Thomson for having acted towards the King according to the precedents of the conduct of civilised Powers towards barbarians, but "that he is blameable for awkwardness in not having offered him a sufficient present to shut his mouth." In Paris cholera has now entirely disappeared from the mortality returns. The capital is busily preparing for the holidays, and there is little social gossip to chronicle. M. François Coppée has been received into the Academy. He made the usual eulogy of his predecessor, M. de Laplace, and in his turn was eulogised by M. Victor Cherbuliez. The Protectionist fever which is permeating all classes in France just now has even affected the Paris University students, who have protested against foreigners being permitted to share their privileges, and complain that too much leniency is accorded to foreigners even in the examinations.

Great excitement has been caused in AUSTRIA by the suicide of Herr Lucas Jauner, the sub-manager of the Lower Austria Discount Bank, who had embezzled a large number of the securities. A run on the bank at once took place, but as its affairs were sound all payments were promptly made, and the panic subsided. A money-lender, named Küfler, has been arrested, as it is supposed that the fraud was perpetrated with his assistance. The *Bourse* at first was somewhat shaken by the revelations, but confidence is now fairly restored, though the recent failures and the stagnation of trade is looked upon as boding a bad beginning for the coming year.

In INDIA, Bombay last week bade farewell to Lord Ripon—a most enthusiastic demonstration in his honour being made by the native population. Before leaving he attended a convocation of the University, received the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws, and took the opportunity of speaking freely on the policy he had pursued during his Viceroyalty. Beginning by stating that he might feel justly proud of the appreciation of his policy which that day's experience showed, he referred to the friendly relations now existing with Afghanistan, and then alluding to the obnoxious measure of closing the Engineering College at Roorkee to all save pure Asiatic students, declared that in his correspondence with the Home Government he had always urged the claims of the Eurasians, and that in consequence the measure would be repealed. Concluding with some general remarks on England's duty towards India, he urged that the former was bound to labour

for the material advantage of the nation, but not for that alone. She must devote herself yet more to their political training and moral elevation. "It was in this spirit that he had tried to discharge his duties. Although only too well aware how little he had succeeded in reaching so high an ideal, still he was not inclined to acquiesce in the opinion of those who said that no substantial work had been done during his Viceroyalty. He appealed from such criticisms to the verdict of the audience before him, and with that verdict he would rest content." Lord Dufferin has been busily taking up the threads of his work at Calcutta, where, Viceregal affairs apart, the chief interest is centred in the proceedings of the committee appointed to see whether the Corporation has neglected its sanitary duties. The facts which are coming out are not wholly creditable to that body. Indeed, a memorial by Chief Justice Cunningham declares that necessary measures have been staved off for economy's sake, and calculates that in Calcutta and its suburbs "seven or eight thousand persons die yearly from preventable causes, being killed no less distinctly, though in a less humane manner, than if they had been taken out and mowed down with grapeshot." Dr. Klein is continuing his investigations into the cause of cholera, and is as determined as ever in his disbelief in Dr. Koch's comma-shaped bacillus.

In the UNITED STATES there is a growing feeling that Germany ought to be punished for prohibiting the importation of American pork and for giving preference to Russian over American petroleum. Pork and petroleum merchants are accordingly forming a combination to urge Congress to adopt retaliatory measures with regard to German exports to the United States.—A disastrous fire has destroyed an orphan asylum at Brooklyn—St. John's Home. There were 700 persons in the building at the time the fire broke out, and twenty children and three adults were burnt to death.—The President has sent the Nicaraguan Treaty to the Senate, with a Message declaring that "The United States have no notion or desire for territorial acquisition or control beyond their present borders, and none such is contemplated by the Treaty. . . . The two countries have by the Treaty provided for the possible use of the Canal by all nations on equal terms, while reserving to the coasting trade of both countries, in which only the contracting parties are interested, the privilege of favourable tolls. The Canal," he concludes, "can be constructed by the able Engineer Corps of our army under their thorough system cheaper and better than a work of such magnitude could otherwise be executed."

In SPAIN a declaration has been signed by our Ambassador and the Spanish Foreign Minister, by which England agrees to raise the limit of the shilling wine duty from 26 to 30 degrees, while Spain places English products on the most-favoured-nation basis.—In ITALY the second anniversary of the execution of Oberdan for attempting the Austrian Emperor's life at Trieste has been commemorated by the various Socialistic societies.—In RUSSIA there is a terrible famine at Archangel.—The revolution in COREA was due, it appears, to the jealousy of the partisans of the Japanese suzerainty and the Chinese tendencies of the Cabinet. After the disturbance the King was taken in charge by the Japanese partisans. On the 6th inst. these were overpowered by the Chinese party, which attacked and destroyed the Japanese Legation building, the Minister, however, escaping with his life.—The German flag has after all been hoisted in NEW GUINEA and the New Britain archipelago "in order to place under the protection of the Empire the German settlements and trading stations there."



THE QUEEN is spending Christmas in the Isle of Wight, where, besides the Princess Beatrice and the children of the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, Prince and Princess Louis of Battenberg and the Duchess of Albany with her children are staying with Her Majesty. The Royal party will keep Christmas even more quietly than usual, owing to their recent mourning, and, indeed, as a rule the Queen prefers to postpone all festivities until the New Year, when Her Majesty presents her personal gifts. Christmas trees, however, are provided for the members of the Royal Household, the servants, and the children attending the Whippingham Schools, when the Queen and Princesses themselves distribute the presents. At the Royal dinner on Christmas Day there will be the orthodox dishes of game pie, boar's head—chosen from amongst the numerous heads sent to Her Majesty at this season by her various German relatives—and a baron of beef weighing 300 lbs., cut from a shorthorn bred by the Queen on the Prince Consort's farm, Windsor. These are placed on the sideboard cold, the beef having been roasted at Windsor and despatched to Osborne on Christmas Eve. Captain Fullerton, of the *Victoria and Albert*, has been the only visitor entertained at dinner by Her Majesty. On Sunday the Royal party attended Divine Service at Osborne, where Canon Prothero officiated. It is still undecided whether the Queen will go to Sandringham for the celebration of Prince Albert Victor's majority. If so, Her Majesty would stay with the Prince and Princess of Wales from January 6th to the 10th.

The Prince and Princess of Wales closed their Worcestershire visit to Lord and Lady Dudley on Saturday. During their stay the Prince enjoyed good sport in Lord Dudley's coverts, the game-bag amounting to about 4,000 head for the three days' shooting, while the Princess and ladies joined the sportsmen at lunch in the woods. On leaving Witley Court, the Prince and Princess went to Worcester, where they received addresses from the town and the Worcester Freemasons, visited the Cathedral and the Porcelain Works, and were heartily greeted by immense crowds. They arrived at Marlborough House late in the afternoon, and were joined by Princes Albert Victor and George, while in the evening the Royal party went to the Haymarket Theatre. On Sunday the Prince and Princess and their sons attended Divine Service, and on Monday night the Prince was present at the first smoking concert of the season given by the Amateur Orchestral Society, when the Duke of Edinburgh played in the band, as usual. On the same evening Prince Albert Victor was present at the banquet at Peterhouse College, Cambridge, in commemoration of the sixth centenary of its foundation. Next day the Prince and Princess and their sons left town for Sandringham to join the young Princesses for Christmas. The Prince of Wales has become President of the Birmingham Agricultural Exhibition for next year, and will visit the Show.

Princess Christian will take part in an amateur morning concert at Oxford on January 20th, in aid of the Sarah Acland Nurses' Home. She will play two pianoforte duets with the Organist of St. George's, Windsor, Mr. W. Parrott.—The Duke of Connaught takes great interest in the scheme for the employment of discharged soldiers, and lately presided at a meeting at Meerut in support of the movement; the Duchess also being present. Probably the Duke will not visit Quetta as intended, owing to lack of time; but the Duke and Duchess have spent a few days at Lahore.—The ex-Empress Eugénie goes to the Isle of Wight next month to stay a few weeks at Osborne Cottage, lent by the Queen.—The Duke and Duchess of Teck remain in Florence for the winter, and have been joined for Christmas by their two sons, who are studying in England



REVIEW OF THE YEAR.—Most people take stock at the end of the year, balance their accounts, reckon up what they have gained, and resolve to do even still better next year. Musical stock-taking becomes simply a rapid survey of the year's work. During 1884 we have happily not experienced the feverish excitement of such a year as 1882, nor the inevitable reaction of 1883. We have progressed steadily, adding a few valuable works to the repertory, and amid the mass of quantity extracting a little of veritable quality. We may especially congratulate ourselves on the further advance made in English music. Not only have all three of our great opera houses—the Royal Italian, Her Majesty's, and Drury Lane—witnessed the production of new operas by British composers; not only have English symphonic, chamber, and other works been heard in our concert rooms; not only has a great oratorio by a British subject been produced at the most important of the year's musical festivals; not only have our popular English concert artists worthily upheld their fame against rivals of all other nations; but British music has penetrated abroad, a British symphony has been heard in both hemispheres, and operas by British composers have invaded even the subsidised stages of exclusive Germany.

Yet it can hardly be said that the year closes with an unclouded operatic outlook. The Covent Garden monopoly has happily broken down. During the year the Covent Garden stage has been occupied by three troupes. In the winter an English operatic company produced Nessler's *Piper of Hanelin* and Julian Edwards' *Victorian*. But the experiment is not to be repeated. The German troupe gave a single performance, in German, of Dr. Villiers Stanford's *Savonarola*, a work not likely to be heard again, at any rate under similar conditions. At the Savoy, Sir Arthur Sullivan's *Princess Ida* hardly reached the success attained by his previous operas. The Carl Rosa Company produced Dr. Stanford's *The Canterbury Pilgrims*, a work which, despite the coldness with which it has been received in the provinces, will probably live. English opera, moreover, flourishes in the provinces, and Mr. Carl Rosa has been confronted by three rival troupes. The sole outcome of the Royal Italian Opera Season was M. Reyer's *Sigurd*. At the close of the season the company went into provisional liquidation, but it is expected that Italian Opera will next year be performed as usual. Mr. Hayes' enterprise at Her Majesty's suddenly collapsed. Opera is, however, now obviously in a state of transition. The last act in the comedy of the abortive Thames Embankment Opera House scheme was the sale of the unfinished edifice for building materials.

The year has been productive of two important symphonic works. Although neither Brahms' third nor Mr. F. H. Cowen's fourth symphony is likely to be rated so highly as previous compositions from the same pens respectively, yet both are valuable additions to our stock of orchestral works. Among works of less interest we have heard for the first time Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody, No. 3, Dvorák's *Humoresque* overture, the revised version of Hubert Parry's piano concerto in F sharp, and Raff's *Romeo and Juliet* overture. The return of Carl Klindworth as conductor, and of Bottesini, the contrabass player, may be alluded to in this paragraph. The Philharmonic Society tried several conductors, but at last Sir Arthur Sullivan has been chosen. The Crystal Palace still furnishes our chief symphony orchestra, followed by the Richter band. An agitation is, however, pending for the establishment of a permanent orchestra for the metropolis.

The list of choral productions should of course be headed by Mr. Mackenzie's oratorio, *The Rose of Sharon*. Received with enthusiasm at Norwich, it has since been twice performed in London. The difficulty of the choral parts, and the excessive willingness of the composer to abbreviate the work, are the two principal dangers which threaten its permanent success. Mr. Harford Lloyd's *Hero and Leander*, Schumann's *King's Son*, Jensen's *Fest of Adonis*, Palestrina's *Assumpta est Maria*, Spohr's vocal Mass in C, a "Te Deum" by Mr. Wingham, Sir George Macfarren's "Te Deum," Wilfrid Bendall's *Paradise*, Villiers Stanford's *Elegiac Ode*, Barnby's madrigal, "It was a Lover and his Lass," and Dr. Sawyer's oratorio, *St. Mary*, are among the other productions of the year. The Sacred Harmonic Choir have passed through a period of criticism, and Mr. Willing's Choir has collapsed. A similar fate awaited the Leslie Choir, but Mr. Henry Leslie himself has stepped forward to the rescue. The Albert Hall Choir has now taken the foremost place, and by the revival of Dvorák's *Stabat Mater*, with Dvorák for the first time in England as conductor, and by the production (in oratorio form) of Wagner's *Parsifal*, it has done exceptionally good work.

In chamber music matters have progressed quietly. The director of the Popular Concerts is content to rest on his oars. Madame Schumann returned for the first time these two years, and Mlle. Kleeberg, who made her *début* at the Crystal Palace, has consolidated her position at St. James's Hall. Dr. Von Bülow returned after a long absence, and gave recitals.

The following among others have during the year entered the holy estate of matrimony. Mr. Santley, Miss Robertson, Miss Santley, M. de Pachmann and Miss Maggie Okey, Mr. H. E. J. Davison, Miss Giulietta Arditi, Miss Ambler and Mr. Brereton, Signor Parisotti and Miss Sadie Singleton, Mr. Alfred Behrend, Miss de Fonblanque, Miss Constance Holman Andrews, Miss Florence Coplestone, and Mr. Walter Goldschmidt, eldest son of the lady once known as Jenny Lind.

Death has, as usual, been busy to thin the ranks of musicians. The obituary of the year includes the names of H. R. H. the Duke of Albany, Sir Michael Costa, Louis Ehler, the critic; Madame Sarolta, the vocalist; M. Waldteufel, composer of dance music; Madame Anna Bishop, vocalist; Madame Marie Taglioni and Madame Fanny Elssler, the dancers; Lenz, author of "Beethoven and his Three Styles;" Louis Brassin, pianist; Smetana, composer and teacher of Dvorák, Charles B. Brahms, Mrs. Zerbini, Victor Massé, the French composer; Madame Halévy, J. G. Waetzgi, Sergeant Trumpeter to the Queen; M. Coedès, the French composer; John Hullah, Herr Löwenberg, the pianist; Madame Tamberlik, Garcia Gutierrez, the Spanish poet, from whose *El Trovador* the story of Verdi's most popular opera was taken; Mrs. Meadows-White, Madame Frezzolini, the vocalist, and Mr. William Latter.

Among the miscellaneous events of the year may be mentioned the jubilee of the octogenarian Sir Julius Benedict, Mr. and Mrs. Ganz' silver wedding, the revival of an orchestra of ladies of the aristocracy, under Viscountess Folkestone, the suppression of the Costa testimonial, and the return of the subscription moneys, the illness and recovery of Mr. Halle, the *début* of Miss Connie Sims Reeves, the opening of the Crystal Palace Exhibition with a *Te Deum* by Sir George Macfarren, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the *début* of Madame Patti and of Madame Pauline Lucca, the twentieth anniversary of Madame Nilsson's *début*, and the discovery of a MS. symphony of Mendelssohn. With the exceptions of the return of Miss Nevada and Mlle. Kleeberg there have been no operatic or concert *débuts* of special importance this year.

Such is a brief and necessarily cursory *resumé* of the year's work.

As far as audiences are concerned, although the season has been peculiarly a bad one, yet the public are, with the increase of musical taste, rapidly becoming more and more appreciative and critical. Flimsy ballads, opera bouffe, ditty operas, and similar efforts, have become almost things of the past, and the great musical public give a ready support only to works of high value or of serious aim. The disappearance of much that was worthless has left the ground clear for better things, and one of the healthiest signs of the time is the rise of a school of British musicians. That school may as yet be only in its early youth, but it is strong, and it will grow. It will be assisted in its development by the kindly nurture of a people who are now fast becoming able to judge for themselves between the bad and the good, who can deal out stern criticism on the one hand, and on the other can offer enthusiastic support, and who have now strong claims to the title long denied them, of a musical nation.



LORD PLUNKET, Bishop of Meath, has been elected Archbishop of Dublin in succession to Dr. French.

THE EPISCOPAL BENCH parts with a representative of the most rigorous High Churchmen of the old school, and with a distinguished Biblical and classical scholar, in Dr. Wordsworth, the Bishop of Lincoln, who in his seventy-fifth year has resigned that See. A nephew of the poet Wordsworth, he was Head Master of Harrow from 1836 to 1844, when Sir Robert Peel made him a Canon of Westminster. He was elevated to the See of Lincoln in 1868 during the first Premiership of Lord Beaconsfield, then Mr. Disraeli.

WRITING TO DEFINE HIS ATTITUDE towards the vivisection question, the Bishop of Oxford pronounces the plea of the old Spanish Inquisitor, false as it was, to have been more forcible than that of the "curious physiologists of Paris or Berlin." Let the vivisectionists, the Bishop says, at least be logical. If a perfect knowledge of the secrets of the human frame is desired in the interests of mankind—let mankind be the victims.

INADEQUACY OF MEANS among the clergy to support themselves and their families seems to be a growing evil. From an analysis of ninety-eight cases of clergymen who had applied for aid to their ordinary household expenses, laid before the last monthly Court of the Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy, it appeared that their average income was 138*l*. On this occasion 1,961*l* was distributed among 150 applicants. The Corporation seems to be an excellent medium for dispensing to the poorer clergy the contributions of sympathetic and benevolent Churchmen.

THE REV. JOHN BUTT, Canon of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Southwark, and for a quarter of a century in chief charge of the Mission at Arundel and private chaplain to the Duke of Norfolk, has been appointed Bishop Auxiliary to Dr. Coffin, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Southwark, who continues ill.

SCOTTISH CONGREGATIONALISM has lost one who was long among its most distinguished ornaments by the death, on Saturday last, near Edinburgh, of the Rev. William Lindsay Alexander, D.D., in his seventy-seventh year. He became in 1835 pastor of a Congregational chapel in Edinburgh, after having been classical tutor in the Lancashire Independent College and minister of a chapel in Liverpool. Distinguished as a preacher and as a scholar, he was Principal of the Theological Hall of the Scottish Congregational Churches, an Examiner in Philosophy at the University of St. Andrews, and a member of the Company for the Revision of the Old Testament. Besides being the author of a number of theological works, he contributed to the eighth edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica the articles, "Moral Philosophy," "Scripture," and "Theology." In 1876, on completing the fortieth year of his Edinburgh pastorate, he was presented with a cheque for 1,500*l*. During recent years he had lived in comparative retirement.

THE REPORT, an elaborate one, of the Salvation Army for 1884 has been published. The total income for the year was upwards of 74,000*l*, leaving a small balance in hand. 30,000*l* is solicited for the work of 1885. A net profit of nearly 7,000*l* had been realised by the trading operations of the Army. These included the sale of musical instruments and watches, specially designed for Salvation use, and of tea among other articles of general consumption not specified.



A SHOCKING MURDER was perpetrated at Woolwich on Monday, the victim being Laura Wilson, the daughter of a tradesman in Beresford Street, Woolwich, and residing as a servant with a Mrs. Hewitt, who is her father's next-door neighbour, and keeps a tobacconist's shop. At half-past two on Monday morning, when Mrs. Hewitt was up giving her infant some food, she heard a noise as if of scuffling in the bedroom occupied by Laura Wilson, who then staggered into the room, exclaiming "I am stabbed! I am stabbed!" Assistance was called for, but before a medical man arrived the poor girl was dead. Suspicion at once attached to Frederick Marshall, a young man who had been paying his addresses to Laura Wilson, and who had been informed a few days before that she had ceased to favour his suit. On Saturday and Sunday he was seen loitering about Mrs. Hewitt's shop, and she complained of him to the police. He was arrested on Monday, five or six hours after the murder, and was brought before the Woolwich police magistrate in the afternoon. Among the witnesses examined was a younger sister of the deceased, who deposed that on the previous Friday she met the prisoner, when he pulled something out of his pocket, and said he would "swing for Charley," who, she explained, was another young man very fond of deceased. The prisoner was remanded until Tuesday next.

THERE HAS BEEN AN unsatisfactory conclusion to the singular action of Lotinga v. the Commercial Union Assurance Company, Limited, which occupied Mr. Justice Manisty and a Special Jury for eight working days. It was brought by Mrs. Lotinga to recover 2,000*l*, the amount of a policy of assurance effected in her favour by her deceased husband with the defendant Company. The claim was contested on the grounds that Lotinga had committed suicide, and that he had falsely described himself, when taking out the policy, as a person of temperate habits. As regards the first plea, there was no doubt that his death had been caused by his drinking some carbolic acid, and the verdict of the coroner's jury which sat upon him was one of suicide. It was contended, however, by the plaintiff that her husband had drunk the carbolic acid mistaking it for whiskey, while the defendants maintained that, being on the verge of bankruptcy—he was a money-lender—and having forged his wife's name to a bill of exchange, he had deliberately poisoned him-

self. The evidence as to his habits was extremely conflicting, and what with this, and the antagonistic theories as to his motives for drinking the carbolic acid, the jury were unable to agree, and were discharged without giving a verdict.

THE EXECUTORS OF COLONEL CLEATHER, one of the sufferers by the defalcations of the notorious Parker, the absconded solicitor, brought in 1883 an action against Mr. Twisden, the surviving partner of the firm, to make good the loss sustained by Parker's appropriation of certain colonial bonds deposited with him. While declaring Mr. Twisden to have been entirely innocent, Mr. Justice Denman decided that he was responsible for the loss incurred by his partner's misdeeds, although he was perfectly unconscious of them. This decision has been reversed by the Court of Appeal.

IN THE CASE OF ELIZABETH GIBBONS, fifty-four (with the details of which our readers are familiar), tried before Mr. Justice Hawkins at the Central Criminal Court for the murder of her husband near Uxbridge, the jury, after half an hour's deliberation, found her guilty, and sentence of death was passed on her.



THE HARVEST OF THE YEAR.—The sowings of wheat covered a somewhat larger area than usual, and the young wheat made capital progress up to June, when a crop fully ten per cent. over average was promised. The month of July was unfavourable, and reduced this promise considerably; but an exceptionally fine August allowed the wheat to be got in very favourably, and the eventual outturn of the crop may be reckoned about thirty-one bushels, or two bushels above an ordinary average. The deliveries since harvest have fully borne out this estimate. Barley was not favoured in the sowing season, which was too dry, or in the month of July, which was too stormy. Otherwise the crop would have been a very fine one. The quality in threshing has turned out satisfactory on the whole. The bulk was reckoned in September at barely an average, but the deliveries of the past three months have been so liberal that some authorities may see fit to revise their estimates. Oats were not favoured by the prevailing dry character of the summer; but the weight and quality exceed an average. Potatoes have proved a large crop for the second consecutive year, hence this popular form of food is competitively cheap with bread, even in a season when the wheat average is depreciated to a thirty-shillings level. The yield of hay and clover has been small; but the hop-gardens and fruit-orchards have given variable rather than uniformly disappointing results. Turnips and the root crops generally are a larger yield than the character of the weather might have led us to expect. Maize grown as cattle food and cut green is a new crop which, in 1884 and in England, has proved a striking success.

THE MARKETS OF THE YEAR.—The principal trade event of 1884 has been the unexampled fall in the value of wheat and flour. The price of wheat was low, and not much above a forty-shilling level during the cereal year which ended August 31, but with a new cereal year in September, and with new deliveries of English, American, and Russian wheat, prices began at once to fall, and, despite all efforts of holders, have continued to decline, until an average sample of wheat is worth only 30*s*. per quarter. This wonderful cheapness, for which parallels must be sought without, instead of within, the present century, has caused great dismay in farming circles, so that a serious reduction in the wheat acreage is confidently expected in 1885. The price of flour has fallen even lower—in proportion—than that of wheat; for, while imports of wheat have been moderate, the receipts of foreign, and especially of American, flour have been very large and regular. The top price of flour is now 33*s*., which is 4*s*. lower than it has ever been before. Barley, in a time of general cheapness, has been comparatively firm. Relative scarcity up to harvest, and good quality since that date, have kept up the price at a level which, although modest, is still remunerative. Oats have been cheap, especially for the light sorts which are shipped from Baltic ports. The demand, however, has been good, and has proved equal to the consumption of very considerable supplies. Maize has remained rather higher in value than many stockowners thought to be warranted by comparison with other staples. Hence demand has been small. America, however, has just reaped an enormous crop of maize, so that cheapness may be expected in the ensuing year.

THE STOCK RECORD OF THE YEAR must be accounted satisfactory, owing to the extirpation of infectious disease. The Privy Council were confronted twelve months since with a very serious problem, but the stringency of their regulations and the vigour of local inspectors and authorities proved sufficient to meet the difficulty. Farmers, becoming really and generally alarmed, co-operated energetically and at much self-sacrifice with the authorities, and the result of the efforts of 1884 is that 1885 starts with a clean bill of health. The extirpation of the disease and the publication of returns showing a decided increase in our flocks and herds, have, combined with dead-meat arrivals from abroad, to lower prices, so that graziers have not done so well in 1884 as they did in the previous year. The ordinary consumer of meat, however, has been "blocked out" by butchers and middlemen, so that the fall in prices leaves the farmer poorer, and the ordinary citizen no richer, than before. The year has been one of good health in the way of ordinary and non-infectious disorders among stock. The lambing season in the spring was very fecund, and there has been a happy absence of rot and other diseases due to damp. The Shows of the year have been well attended. The Amsterdam Show has drawn attention to the Dutch milch kine, but they take only second place at best, the Jerseys yielding richer milk, and being more economical to feed. Horse-breeding has had increased attention in 1884, the Shows having attracted more support than formerly, and the selling prices being generally very good.

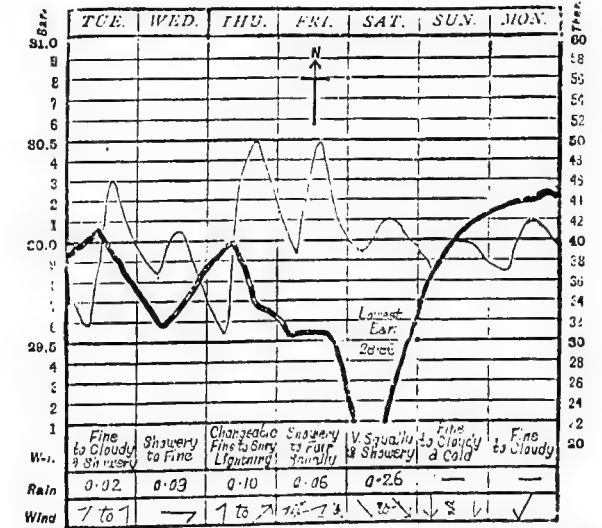
AGRICULTURAL LEGISLATION OF THE YEAR.—The parable of the unjust judge has received one more illustration since last Christmastide, and farmers' impotency has wrung from a hostile House of Commons a protective measure which, but for pressure from without, would certainly have never become law. Originally a Conservative demand, the Cattle Diseases Bill, 1884, was forced on the Government by something like a revolt of their agricultural supporters, well known Liberal county members, and even some Radicals, being as urgent for the Bill as were the Duke of Richmond and Mr. Jacob Wilson. When the Government took up the Bill they attempted to rob it of vitality and effect by various provisions which, however, were struck out in Committee by the agricultural vote. The Government did not dare to abandon the Bill altogether, and the matter ended in its being passed into law almost exactly as the Duke of Richmond had introduced it originally. This important statute absolutely prohibits the bringing of cattle into England from countries where contagious diseases are rife among the flocks and herds. Another matter of much moment, that of Local Taxation, has been brought forward by Mr. A. Pell, M.P., who, by 208 to 197, carried in the House of Commons a resolution declaring that "further measures should be immediately taken to relieve ratepayers in counties and boroughs in respect of local charges imposed on them for national services." No more striking example of the

change which has occurred in the spirit and position of the House of Commons of recent years can be found than in the open contempt with which the Government have been able to treat this deliberate declaration of a full House. At the same time the success of agriculturists over the Cattle Diseases Bill leads us to believe that impotency combined with patience will eventually result in a victory over the local taxation question. Attempts to throw the expense of elections on local residents and to pass new regulations favouring railways at the expense of agricultural interests have been decisively defeated. On the whole the farmers' friends have made fair progress since a year ago.

GENERAL NOTES OF THE YEAR.—The Royal Agricultural Society held their Show at Shrewsbury with a moderate amount of success. The most important Show in the South of England was held at Maidstone, but was spoiled by rain. The Shows in the Eastern Counties and also in the North of England were mostly favoured by fine weather, and were generally successful.—The new form of fodder-saving known as ensilage has made astounding progress during the year, and there are now in the country nearly 700 silos in full use. An Ensilage Show held in London during the present month has been very successful, and the value of the process is now universally acknowledged.—The extreme cheapness of wheat in France as well as here has led to a violent Protectionist agitation among our neighbours. The Government have decided to impose a duty of about 5*s*. per quarter, and the only question is whether the agricultural interest will be content with an impost of such comparatively small amount.—Dairy farming has made material advance during the year, and the Dairy Shows are becoming very important. The extension of what may be called the science of dairying is most noticeable in the Western and Midland Counties. There is, perhaps, more hope for this than for any other branch of English agriculture, and we do not despair of seeing England produce enough milk, cheese, and butter for her population. Some meat and much corn will always have to be imported.—The poultry returns collected by the Government for the first time last Midsummer show that Ireland is, in this respect, better off, and Great Britain worse off, than had been imagined to be the case. The great success of Poultry Shows may be put down to the prevalence of fancy, and regarded as a branch of country amusement rather than of agricultural economy. So long as we pay millions sterling to France for eggs and find a fowl costing 4*s*. in Leadenhall Market, we cannot claim to have made any real progress. Farmers, however, are now giving increased attention to this form of industry. *Sero, sed serio*, let us hope.

WEATHER CHART FOR THE WEEK

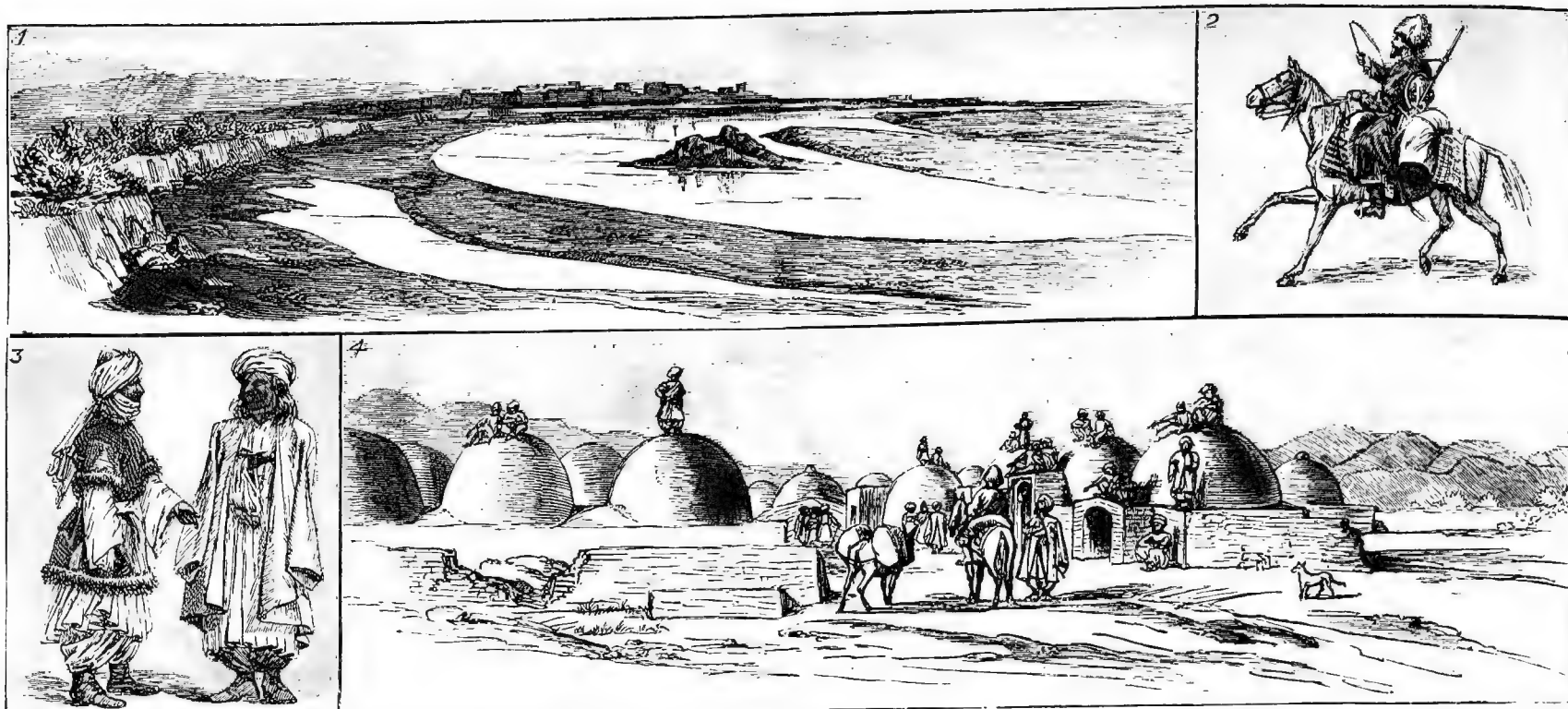
FROM DECEMBER 16 TO DECEMBER 22 (INCLUSIVE).



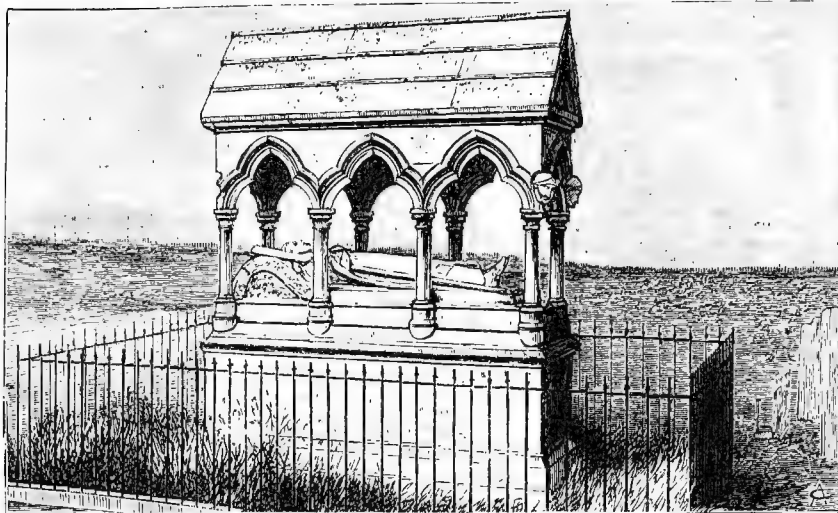
EXPLANATION.—The thick line shows the variations in the height of the barometer during the past week ending Wednesday midnight. The fine line shows the shade temperature for the same interval, and gives the maximum and minimum readings for each day, with the (approximate) time at which they occurred. The information is furnished to us by the Meteorological Office.

REMARKS.—At the commencement of the present period pressure was highest over France and lowest off the west of Norway, and while showers of cold rain, sleet, or hail fell occasionally in many places, still the weather on the whole showed some improvement on that of recent weeks. This slight change, however, proved of short duration, as a further accession to the already numerous depressions which have visited our shores of late caused the weather to again fall into an unsettled condition generally. Two of these depressions passed outside our northern coasts in an east-north-easterly direction on Thursday (18th inst.) and Friday (19th inst.), and produced strong south-westerly winds and westerly gales on our western and south-western shores, with rain at most places, and snow at one or two stations; and, while thunder was heard in Ireland and Scotland, lightning was seen very generally. By far the most serious disturbance of the week, however, was that which passed rapidly across Ireland and England during Friday night (19th inst.), and the centre of which reached Yarmouth by Saturday (20th inst.), at 8 P.M. The barometer now fell rapidly at all the more southern stations and France, while the gradients for north-westerly winds became very steep, so that gales of exceptional severity raged in the Channel and in the west of France, accompanied by cold showers generally. As the depression moved away east and south the barometer rose with great rapidity, and the northerly wind, previously but moderate at our south-eastern stations, now increased there considerably also, while it continued unabated in the south-west and in France. The well-marked effect on the barometer in London during the passage of this cyclonic disturbance is shown clearly in the accompanying diagram. The week closed with a decided alteration in the barometric distribution over our islands, a large anti-cyclone then embracing the greater part of the country, with generally quiet weather. The barometer was highest (30.23 inches) on Monday (22nd inst.); lowest (28.86 inches) on Saturday (20th inst.); range, 1.37 inches. Temperature was highest (50°) on Thursday (19th inst.) and Friday (19th inst.); lowest (31°) on Thursday (18th inst.); range, 19°. Rain fell on five days. Total fall, 0.53 inches. Greatest amount on any one day, 0.26 inches, on Saturday (20th inst.).

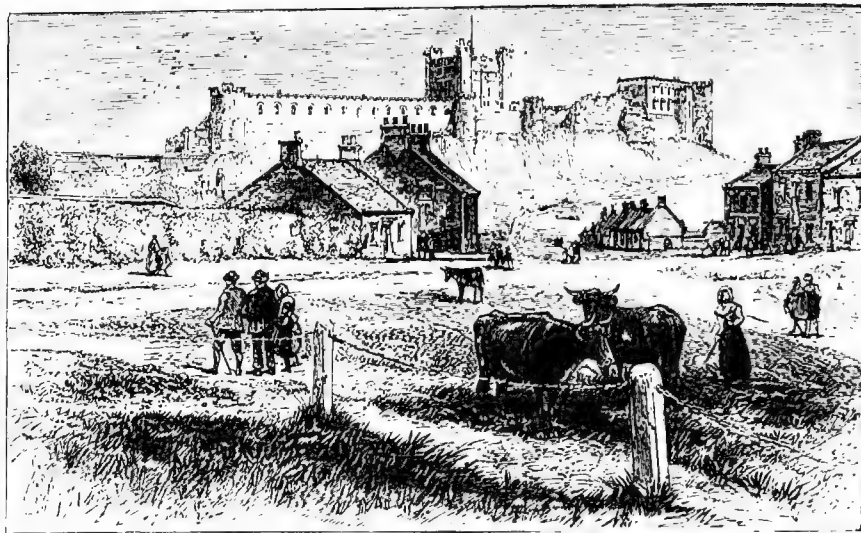
SUNDRIES.—Mr. Henry Frowde sends us a specimen of his quarto edition of the Oxford Bible for Teachers, for Family Use, illustrated with steel engravings, and accompanied by the companion volume entitled "Helps to the Study of the Bible," which contains the essence of many costly commentaries, and includes Concordance, Index, Dictionary, and Maps. The Bible is admirably printed, and with the "Helps" forms a very suitable New Year's Gift, or for a newly-married couple.—We have received a selection of pocket and office diaries from Messrs. T. J. and J. Smith. They are all extremely handy and compact, and contain all the information usually given in such publications.—Next we have to acknowledge the ever-useful "Whittaker's Almanack" for 1885, which now has become quite a national annual. This year a list of fairs is added, and an annual summary of the drama, while the appendix—always valuable reading—contains statistical articles on such burning questions of the day as the Navies of the Great Powers, Colonisation by European Powers, and the National Debt.—Mr. Cremer, jun., of 210, Regent Street, has sent us a parcel of interesting and amusing toys, suitable for Christmas and New Year's gifts.—Mr. Rudolf Blind has just finished an admirable crayon drawing of Mr. Wilson Barrett as Hamlet. The drawing, which is life-size and a full-length, depicts Hamlet standing in the churchyard with Yorick's skull in his hands.



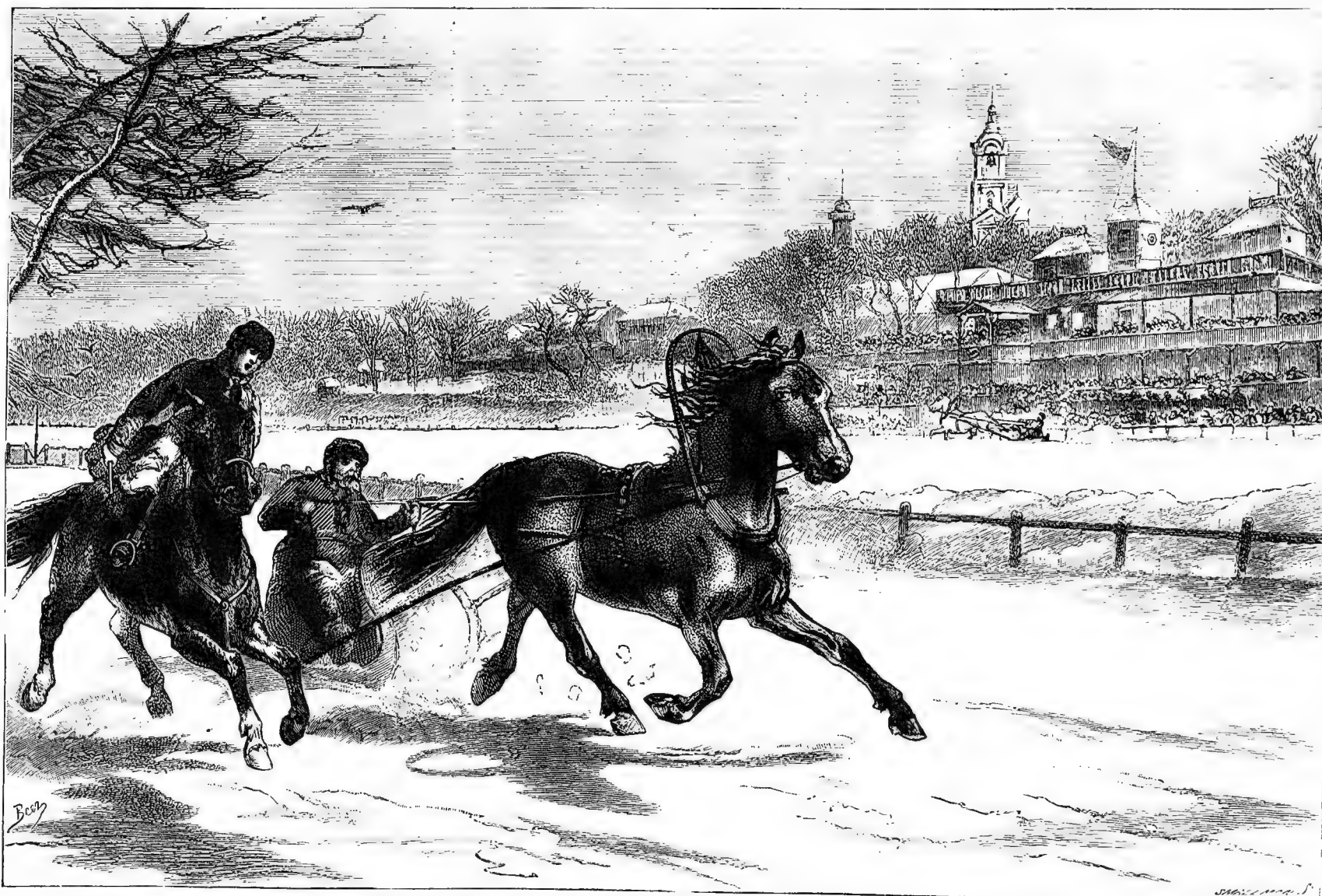
1. Kala-i-Fateh, on the Helmand.—2. An Afghan Guide.—3. Biluch Camel Drivers.—4. Entrance to an Afghan Village.
WITH THE INDIAN SECTION OF THE AFGHAN FRONTIER COMMISSION



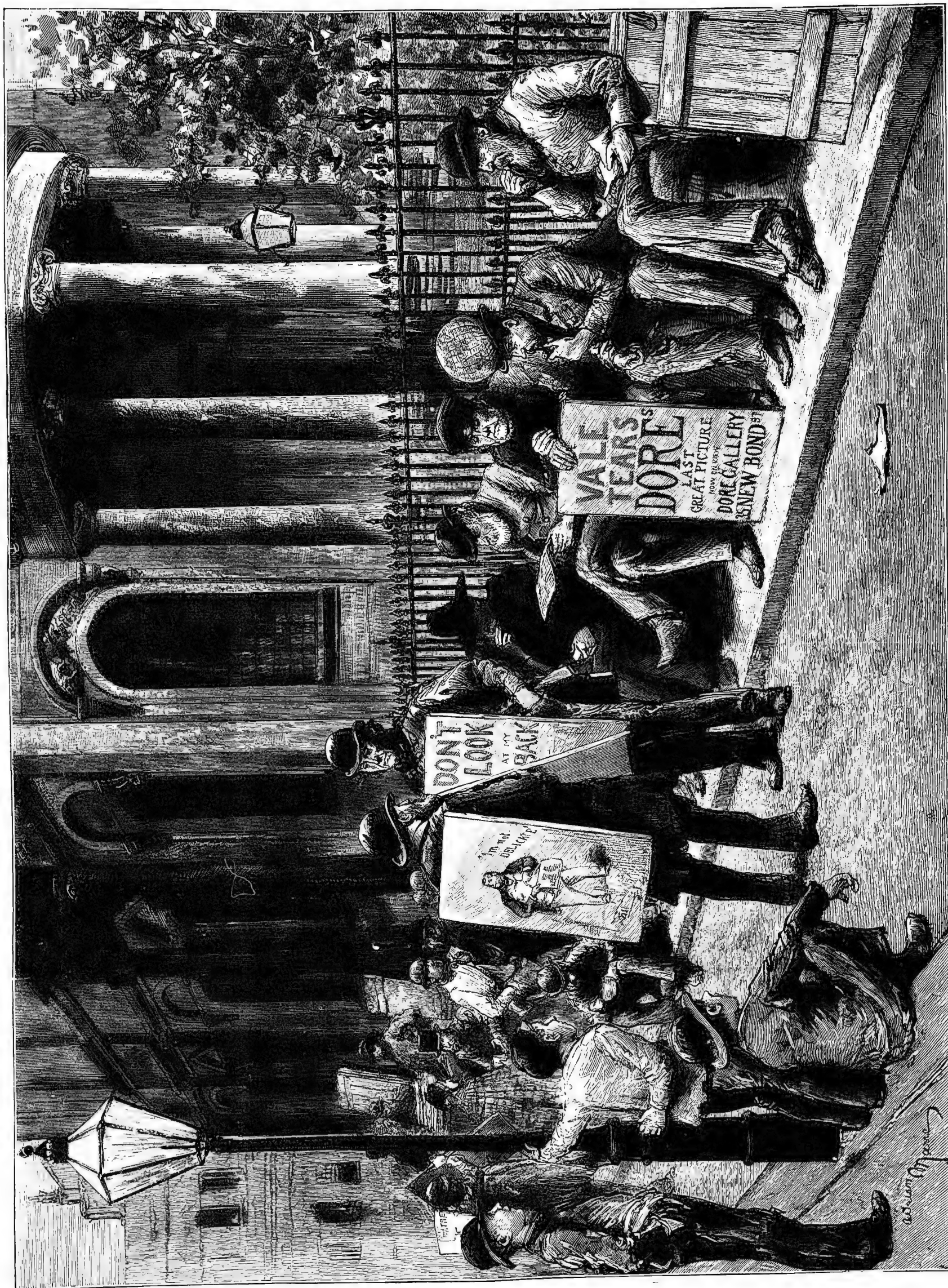
GRACE DARLING'S MONUMENT, BAMBOROUGH CHURCHYARD



BAMBOROUGH CASTLE, NORTHUMBERLAND



WINTER IN RUSSIA — TROTTING RACES AT PRISNENSKIJ PRUD, NEAR THE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS, MOSCOW



A MID-DAY REST—"SANDWICH-MEN" IN THE STRAND

Eighteen Hundred and Eighty-Four

In the year 1884 the peace of the world has been broken only by the fighting in the Soudan and the irregular warfare between France and China. The commercial depression complained of in 1883 has not been relieved; nor are there signs in any great country that we may expect in the near future an important revival of industry and trade. The year, however, has been one of great political activity; and in the general history of mankind it is likely to be made memorable by the proceedings of the West African Conference, which has arrived at decisions affecting the interests of every civilised nation.

ENGLAND.—In our own country public attention has been directed to many important questions, among which the foremost place belongs to the question of Parliamentary Reform. Soon after the assembling of Parliament in February Mr. Gladstone submitted to the House of Commons a Franchise Bill, in which it was proposed that the principle of household suffrage should be extended to the counties. The Conservative party, without disputing the expediency of the measure, insisted that it ought to be accompanied by a scheme for the Redistribution of Seats; and an amendment to this effect was moved by Lord John Manners. In the division the Government secured a majority of 130 votes; 210 votes being given for the amendment, 340 against it. After much discussion the Bill passed through Committee, and was read a third time, without essential change; and in July it was introduced into the House of Lords. The Upper House did not formally reject it; but a large majority decided that it could be discussed only in association with a Redistribution Bill. The Government then resolved that there should be an Autumn Session, and, abandoning all its most important measures, brought the business of the Session as soon as possible to an end. Much public excitement was caused by the action of the Peers, and it found its earliest expression in a great meeting in Hyde Park, to which many thousands of working men marched in procession through Pall Mall and Piccadilly. Afterwards hundreds of meetings were held in England and Scotland, a large proportion of them attended by vast numbers; the Conservatives "demonstrating" in some districts with not less zeal and success than their opponents. On the whole, the agitation was conducted with good humour; but at Aston Park, Birmingham, and at Dumfries there were riots which seemed to indicate that the dispute, if not quickly settled, might give rise to dangerous irritation. When Parliament re-assembled in October, the moderate men of both parties were anxious that some way out of the difficulty might be found; for the Radicals had demanded, not only that the Franchise Bill should be accepted without a Redistribution Bill, but that the House of Lords should be either "mended or ended"—a demand which was as distasteful to the Whigs as to the Conservatives. Accordingly Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville announced to Parliament that the Redistribution Bill would be introduced into the House of Commons on condition that when it had been read a second time the House of Lords would pass the Franchise Bill; and they agreed that before its introduction the Redistribution Bill should be made a subject of negotiation between the Conservative and the Liberal leaders. This proposal was accepted; and in the course of a few days it was known that Lord Salisbury and Sir Stafford Northcote on the one hand, and the Cabinet on the other, had arrived at an understanding. The result was that the Redistribution Bill was soon read a second time by the House of Commons, and the Franchise Bill became law. The main provisions of the Redistribution Bill are that no town with a population under 15,000 shall have separate representation, and that large towns and counties shall be split up into divisions, each division being represented by one member. The principle of single-member constituencies has been vigorously assailed by the advocates of proportional representation; but it seems to have received the approval, although not the enthusiastic approval, of the majority of politicians.

Next to the Franchise Bill the London Municipality Bill was, perhaps, the measure which excited the strongest interest, at least in London. It was introduced by Sir William Harcourt, but Parliament found no opportunity of giving it full consideration. Another important measure was Mr. Chamberlain's Bill for the Protection of Life and Property at Sea. This Bill, like Sir William Harcourt's, was crushed out by the pressure of other business. It was vehemently attacked by shipowners, who succeeded in inducing the Government to submit the subject to a Royal Commission. The details of the question are known only to experts, but there can be no doubt that in this matter the sympathy of the public has been with Mr. Chamberlain rather than with his opponents. The state of the Navy has occasioned much animated discussion, some high authorities contending that our naval forces are not now greatly superior to those of France. Yielding to the popular demand, the Government announced during the Autumn Session that in the course of the next five years it proposed to spend about five-and-a-half millions in building new ships, in completing those already begun, and in developing our system of coast defence.

In what may be called the social history of the year, by far the most important facts have been those connected with the depression of trade. In the ship-building yards of England and Scotland multitudes of workmen, who were for some time in receipt of high wages, have been thrown out of employment. Farmers, notwithstanding the fact that the harvest of 1884 was an unusually good one, still complain that their business is unprofitable; and agricultural labourers, unable to make a living in the country, continue to crowd into towns in search of work. One result of this state of things has been the revival of the cry for Fair Trade, but there is no evidence that the agitation has produced much impression on the working classes, some of whose leaders, influenced in part by the theories of Mr. Henry George, are apparently disposed to call for more drastic remedies. In February a Royal Commission was appointed to make inquiries as to the dwellings of the poor both in towns and in rural districts. The Commission has examined a large number of witnesses, and it is hoped that its Report may prepare the way for one of the most important legislative measures of modern times. During the present year an unusual amount of attention has been given to the relations between England and the colonies, and an influential Society has been formed for the purpose of advocating Imperial Federation. The proposal is that, so far as local affairs are concerned, the mother country and her colonies shall be perfectly independent, but that a Federal Council shall be established for the protection of their common interests. It is admitted by almost all Englishmen that the object is one for which it would be worth while to make considerable sacrifices; but Mr. Forster and Lord Rosebery, who have taken the lead in this movement, have hitherto confined themselves to the statement of general principles, so that the public are unable to decide whether the scheme is practicable.

In SCOTLAND the grievances of the crofters have formed one of the principal subjects of public discussion. The crofters ask for more land, fair rent, security of tenure, and compensation for improvements; and the majority of Scotch Liberals appear to be of opinion that these demands are not unreasonable. As yet, however, the Government have only sent an armed force to Skye for the

maintenance of order, and if we may judge from a speech delivered by Sir William Harcourt in the Autumn Session, he and his colleagues are not very eager to attempt the solution of a complicated and difficult problem. The agitation is becoming a very formidable one, for the crofters of many districts are pledging themselves to pay no rent until a Bill corresponding to the Irish Land Act has been passed for their benefit.

In IRELAND agrarian violence has been held in check by the rigid enforcement of the Crimes Act, but there is no sign that England has even begun to overcome the discontent of the mass of the Irish people. The tone of the Nationalist Press has been as insolent as at any previous period, and in Parliament Mr. Parnell's followers have continued their efforts to bring discredit upon English institutions. Lord Spencer has discharged the duties of his office with remarkable firmness and discretion, and during the greater part of the year he was ably seconded by Mr. Trevelyan, who has recently been succeeded by Mr. Campbell-Bannerman. Mr. Trevelyan has been promoted to a seat in the Cabinet as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.—The Fenians have been very active in London this year, the latest of their exploits being an attempt to blow up London Bridge. The dynamitards have, however, done little harm, and they have not even the satisfaction of having frightened England.

On the 28th of March the Duke of Albany suddenly died. His death was sincerely regretted by the nation, for he had won universal respect by his frankness, his intelligence, and his generous sympathy with some of the most important public movements of the day. Among the other eminent men who have died in 1884, the most distinguished was Mr. Fawcett, who, notwithstanding his blindness, had made for himself a great place in the political world by the rare qualities both of his character and of his intellect. Lord Ampthill, whose death we have also to record, was not so well known as Mr. Fawcett; but his services as Ambassador at Berlin were of high importance, and it will be no easy task for his successor, Sir E. Malet, to fill his place.

EGYPT.—Englishmen have little reason to congratulate themselves on the proceedings of their Government with regard to Egypt during the last twelve months. So many blunders have been committed that the world has begun to doubt whether England still possesses the virtues by which her empire was built up. In the opening days of the year the greatest confusion prevailed at Cairo, for it was rumoured that the Mahdi was approaching at the head of a powerful force. The British Government tried to restore confidence by ordering that the Soudan should be abandoned; and soon afterwards they sent General Gordon across the desert to provide, if possible, for the safety of the garrison and population of Khartoum. In the Eastern Soudan the Egyptian garrisons were in imminent danger, for the rebels, headed by Osman Digma, were both numerous and well organised. Baker Pasha, advancing with an Egyptian force to the relief of Tokar, was routed on the 4th of February, and it was with the utmost difficulty that he was able to bring together again a small remnant of his army at Suakim. It was then resolved that the task should be undertaken by English troops, but before decisive steps could be taken Osman Digma captured Sinkat, which had been bravely defended by Tewfik Pasha. Even General Graham found that the rebels were formidable enemies, but in March he defeated them at El Teh and at Tamaniab, and from that time England has had no difficulty in holding the Red Sea Coast. Meanwhile, General Gordon had reached Khartoum, where he was eagerly welcomed. Had a force been despatched to his aid by the Suakim-Berber route immediately after General Graham's victories, he would probably soon have fulfilled his mission; but the opportunity was lost, and the result was that he had to maintain his position at Khartoum with very inadequate means of defence. He complained bitterly that he had been "abandoned," and threw on the Government the responsibility for any disasters to which their inaction might lead. For many weeks he was unable to communicate with the outer world; and nothing was known about him except that he was surrounded, and that he occasionally made attempts to drive back the besiegers. Mr. Gladstone was urged again and again to promise that at the earliest possible date an expedition would be despatched for the relief of Gordon; but for a long time he would give no definite pledge. At last even he was obliged to admit that further delay might be perilous, and an army, under Lord Wolseley, is now slowly making its way up the Nile. Gordon's heroism has excited the admiration of the whole civilised world; and it is not too much to say that the record of all that he has done at Khartoum will form one of the brightest pages in English history. With his name will always be associated that of his brave comrade, Colonel Stewart, who fell into the hands of the rebels, and was murdered.

In Egypt Proper the English Government have done nothing to recover the ground they lost in 1883. After the abandonment of the Soudan, Cherif Pasha, the Prime Minister of Egypt, resigned, and he was succeeded by Nubar Pasha, who is still in office. Nubar complains that he is practically powerless; and it is true that his authority is little more than nominal. This would be of slight consequence if English agents were permitted to reorganise the administration; but we will neither rule Egypt ourselves, nor will we allow any one else to rule it. For a short time Mr. Clifford Lloyd ventured to display some energy; but his activity was found to be inconvenient, and he was recalled. In the Spring the Government devised a scheme for the settlement of Egypt's financial difficulties; and the Powers were invited to send representatives to London to take it into consideration. Before assenting to this proposal, France insisted that certain concessions should be made to her by England; and the Conference did not meet until the two countries had arrived at an "agreement," which, if it had been carried out, would have deprived us of all the advantages we had gained by the Battle of Tel-el-Kebir. Fortunately the Conference failed, and the Anglo-French Agreement was annulled. Lord Northbrook was then sent to Egypt to examine and report on the state of the country, and one of his first acts was to order the suspension of the Sinking Fund—a proceeding which was admitted to be illegal, and for which the Egyptian Government has since been directed by the proper tribunal to make reparation. After Lord Northbrook's return the Cabinet prepared a fresh set of proposals for the relief of Egyptian taxpayers, partly at the expense of the bondholders; and the proposals are now being discussed.

INDIA AND THE COLONIES.—A note of warning has lately been sounded as to the security of our Indian Empire, but the public have not been persuaded either that Russia purposes to invade India, or that if she did she would be welcomed by the native population. Some of the irritation aroused by the Ilbert Bill still survives; but it is confidently expected that this will be allayed by the tact of the new Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, who has succeeded Lord Ripon.—In AUSTRALIA the question of the year has been Inter-Colonial Federation, and it is not impossible that an experiment in this direction may soon be made, for Lord Derby lately sent to all the Australian Governments a despatch covering a reprint of a draft Bill adopted some time ago by a Convention at Sydney, with certain amendments suggested by Her Majesty's Government. The Federal Council sketched in the Bill would have very limited functions; but it would enable the Australian colonies to pursue a common policy about matters in which they are all equally interested.—In SOUTH AFRICA the Boers, feeling sure that England would never again interfere with them, have given a vast amount of trouble. When, however, they went so far as to take possession of Bechuanaland, and openly to defy our authority, it became absolutely necessary to

stop their depredations. Sir Charles Warren has gone to protect the interests of Montsioa; and the announcement that he will soon appear at the head of a strong force has already produced an excellent effect.

FRANCE.—For some time France has been practically at war with China, although war has never been formally proclaimed. In June General Millot, commanding in Tonkin, reported that a French column of 700 men had been attacked on the march to Langson by 4,000 regular Chinese troops. This was in direct violation of treaties; and M. Patenôtre was immediately ordered to proceed to Tientsin in a man-of-war, and to demand an explanation. No satisfactory explanation being forthcoming, Admiral Courbet seized Kelung in Formosa, and afterwards bombarded and destroyed the arsenal of Foochow. He also silenced the Minyan and Kintai forts. In October the French were repulsed at Formosa, but about the same time they achieved a considerable success in Tonkin. In the conflict M. Ferry has had the support of the Chambers; but the struggle is very unpopular in France, and the nation was well pleased when it heard that Lord Granville had offered to act as mediator. China, however, declined to accept what seemed to the English Minister fair terms, and the world waits with some anxiety to see whether regular war will be rendered inevitable.

Towards the close of 1883 M. Ferry suddenly proposed that the Constitution should be revised; and in August, 1884, the work was accomplished by the National Assembly. The decisions of the Assembly were that the Princes of France should be ineligible for civil or military office; that the Republic should be inviolable; and that the law regulating the election of the Senate should be expanded from the Constitution. Afterwards the Chambers passed a Bill, the effect of which will be to make the Senate a body as nearly as possible like the Chamber of Deputies. Life-senatorships have been abolished; and the seventy-five Senators whom the Senate has hitherto nominated will henceforth be elected in the same way as other members of the House.

There has been much distress among French workmen, and the anarchists have occasionally caused some alarm in Paris and other large cities. In the Summer cholera broke out in Toulon and Marseilles, and it soon swept over many of the neighbouring towns and villages, whence it passed to Genoa and Naples. Afterwards it appeared at Nantes, in some parts of Normandy, and at Paris; but its ravages were stopped by the approach of cold weather.

GERMANY.—In 1884 the Germans have been greatly delighted by Prince Bismarck's colonial policy. He has annexed Angola, Pequena and the Cameroons, and has placed the north coast of New Guinea under a Protectorate. It is hoped that the acquisition of these territories may be the first step towards the formation of a great colonial Empire. Englishmen are watching "the expansion of Germany" with curiosity, but without jealousy, for they will gain by the development of German trade. Their only regret is that Lord Granville and Lord Derby did not at once cordially assent to the hoisting of the Imperial flag in Angora Pequena.—The summoning of a West African Conference to Berlin was, of course, closely connected with Prince Bismarck's schemes for the establishment of German colonies. The Conference has not attempted to interfere with English rights on the Niger, and with regard to the Basin of the Congo, which it has declared open to the traders of all nations for twenty years, its policy has been in exact accordance with our ideas and customs.

Prince Bismarck's foreign policy seldom fails to please his countrymen, and this year it has been as successful as usual. His aim has been to strengthen the alliance between Germany and Austria, and to make Russia more friendly to both Powers; and the meeting of the three Emperors, with their Chancellors, at Skirnievitz, in September, afforded the best possible evidence that his object had been attained.—At home, he has not been so fortunate. The general election in the Autumn was so far favourable to him that it resulted in a slight increase of the Conservative and National Liberal parties. The constituencies did not, however, give him a majority; and he was disagreeably surprised by the popularity of the Socialist candidates, who secured the support of more than half-a-million of electors. The new Parliament has already irritated the Chancellor, large majorities having repeatedly voted in a manner directly opposed to his wishes.

ITALY, SPAIN, HOLLAND, and BELGIUM.—But for the invasion of cholera, Italy would have attracted little attention in 1884, for it has not been stirred by any great political agitation. In recalling the events of the year, most Italians would probably say that they were chiefly touched by the recollection of King Humbert's courage and humanity in visiting the cholera wards of the hospitals in Naples.—Spain has passed through a more exciting period, a reactionary Cabinet having been formed in January by Canovas del Castillo, who afterwards secured a majority in the country by bringing much pressure to bear on the electors.—In Holland, the death of the Prince of Orange will lead to some important consequences, for a young Princess will now succeed to the throne, and she cannot inherit the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.—The Belgians have been brought almost to the verge of revolution by a violent quarrel between the advocates and the opponents of religious instruction in public schools. When the Education Bill, passed by a Clerical majority, was submitted to the King, he had a difficult part to play, for the Liberals urged him to reject it; but he wisely decided that as a Constitutional Sovereign he had no alternative but to accept the will of Parliament.

RUSSIA AND TURKEY.—Russia has lately been advancing quietly but rapidly in Central Asia, and it would not be very surprising if she attempted by-and-by to make herself mistress of Herat, notwithstanding the labours of the Commission which has been appointed to determine the frontiers of Afghanistan. From Macedonia come vague rumours about Turkish atrocities, and, according to Sir H. Layard, these reports have probably been started by "Russian agents." If so, the revival of the Eastern Question is not far off—which is anything but an agreeable prospect either for the Turks or for the rest of mankind.

THE UNITED STATES.—Political parties in the United States have always been remarkable for the bitterness with which they have attacked one another, but they have seldom been so vehement as in the agitation which preceded the election of Governor Cleveland as President. The causes of their violence are not very obvious, since the political principles of the two candidates were essentially the same. The Democrats, indeed, are not quite so decidedly committed to Protection as the Republicans; and they profess to be eager for the reform of the Civil Service. But it is not generally supposed that under the new President there will be much change either in the Civil Service or in the Tariff. Perhaps the real significance of the election will be found in the fact that the South will now, for the first time since the war, be treated in all respects exactly like the North.—In April, before Mr. Cleveland and Mr. Blaine were chosen as the representatives of the Democrats and the Republicans respectively, the people of the United States were startled by a terrible riot at Cincinnati, due to popular indignation at the mal-administration of justice: an infinitely more serious grievance than those about which politicians were afterwards spouting from innumerable platforms. Since the Presidential election the nation has been warmly interested by the Exhibition at New Orleans, which promises to be one of the most brilliant international shows the world has yet seen.



B. WILLIAMS.—Three songs, music by Ciro Pinsuti, will be acquisitions to the drawing-room repertoire; they are respectively: "Allhallow E'en," words by Mary Mark Lemon, published in three keys, "Little Love," and "Trust and Be True." The words of the two latter are by G. Clifford Bingham.—"Years Ago" is a pathetic song in a minor key, words by A. Valdemar, music by Henry R. Mark. —By E. Jakobowski are four pianoforte pieces, pleasing both to learn and to play; they are entitled collectively, "Suite Italienne;" No. 1, "Serenata," No. 2, "Siciliana," No. 3, "Pifferare," No. 4, "Tarantella." All are characteristic of their titles, and suitable for after-dinner execution. —A very charming idyll for the pianoforte is "By the Mill Stream," by Emil Waldimir. —Simple and playable for young fingers is "Silver Moonlight Gavotte," by J. Pridham. —A trifle more difficult, but equally pleasing, is "Pastorelle Suisse," by Giacomo Ferraris. —From this firm come some very excellent specimens of dance music. Two very good sets of waltzes are the "Vis-à-Vis," by F. Mullen, and "Mizpah," by Carl Olma. —Three

equally good polkas are respectively, "Dow Bells," by C. H. R. Marriott, "The Rhine Polka," by Alfred Mullen, and "Fleur-de-lis," by W. Smallwood, which will find double favour with the young folks on account of its dainty frontispiece and its pretty melody. —"The Medley Schottische," by C. H. R. Marriott, is merry and attractive. —A showy and tuneful after-dinner piece is "The Outpost March," by Ferdinand Kessler.

MESSRS. ENOCH AND SONS.—Two well-written songs likely to become very popular, written and composed by G. C. Bingham and Milton Wellings, are "Lady Love" and "Sunshine and Shadow." Both are published in three keys. —Another beautiful poem by Mary Mark Lemon, "The Chord of Love," has been set to music by A. H. Behrend in a very charming style, with violin or violoncello accompaniment. It is published in three keys. —Replete with pathos is "Trust Me, Darling," written and composed by G. C. Bingham and J. L. Roeckel. —Four songs of a lively school, suitable for Christmas, are "The Press Gang," written and composed by Michael Watson; "Yes, If You Like," words by Magdeline Wycombe, music by C. F. Hayward; "Much Ado About Nothing," written and composed by Cotsford Dick; and "Kissing Time," words by F. E. Weatherly, music by Ciro Pinsuti. —A very welcome Christmas Box to the lover of thoroughly good and classical music will be found in "The Second Ruff Album for the Pianoforte," edited by A. Schloesser. It contains nine of this gifted composer's

best works. It is brought out in the *Format Litoff*. —At this season, when there is so great a demand for new dance music, "The Florentia Waltz," by G. M. Lane, and "Prince Orlofsky Waltz," by C. A. Rada, will take fair places in a ball-room programme, albeit they are wanting in originality, and the like of them has been heard many times before now.

CHRISTMAS APPEALS.—At this charitable season the claims of the valuable London Fever Hospital, Liverpool Road, may well be urged afresh. Though conducted with the utmost care and economy the expenditure inevitably exceeds the receipts, and help is urgently needed. In thirty-eight years 43,348 patients have been received in the hospital. Subscriptions to be sent to the Secretary, Mr. E. Burn-Callander, at the hospital. —Another appeal is from the Homes for Working Girls in London, who plead for aid to extend their useful work. Eight homes are now scattered over London, and eighty-six additional beds have been provided, requiring 1,000l. to meet the expenses. Donations will be received by the Hon. Director, J. Shrimpton, Esq., 38, Lincoln's Inn Fields, W.C. —The Ragged School Union also pleads for support. Its extensive work is too well known to need further explanation, and in this winter season particularly deserves help, which may be sent to the Secretary, Mr. R. Kirk, at Exeter Hall.

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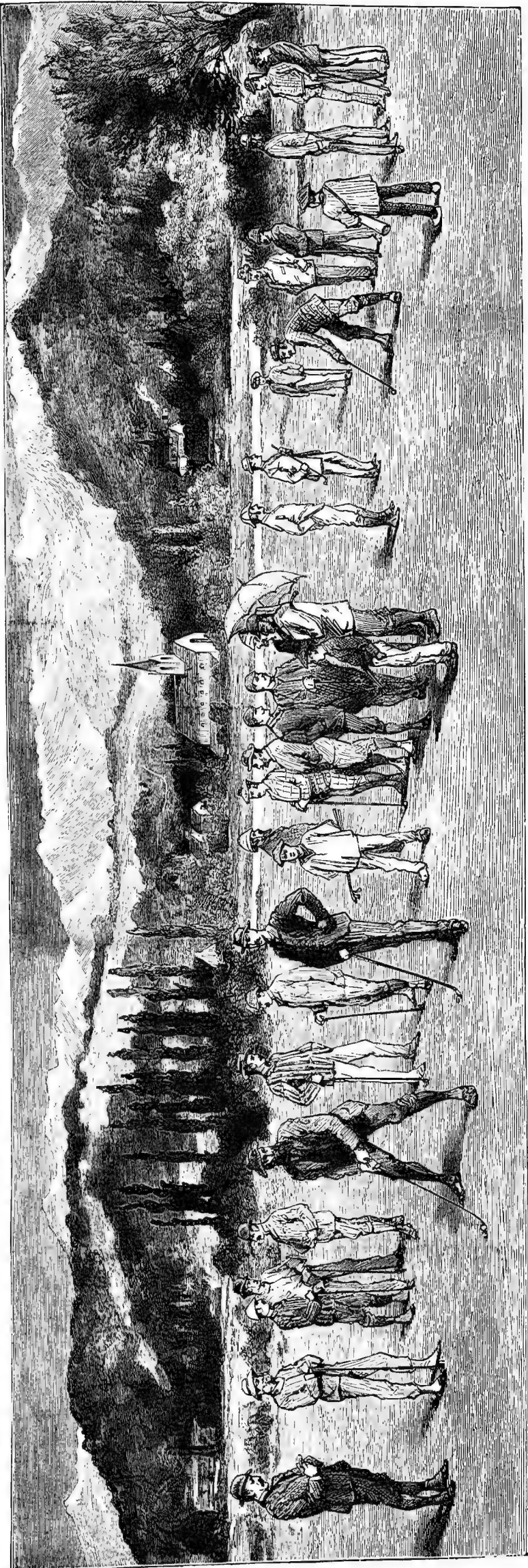
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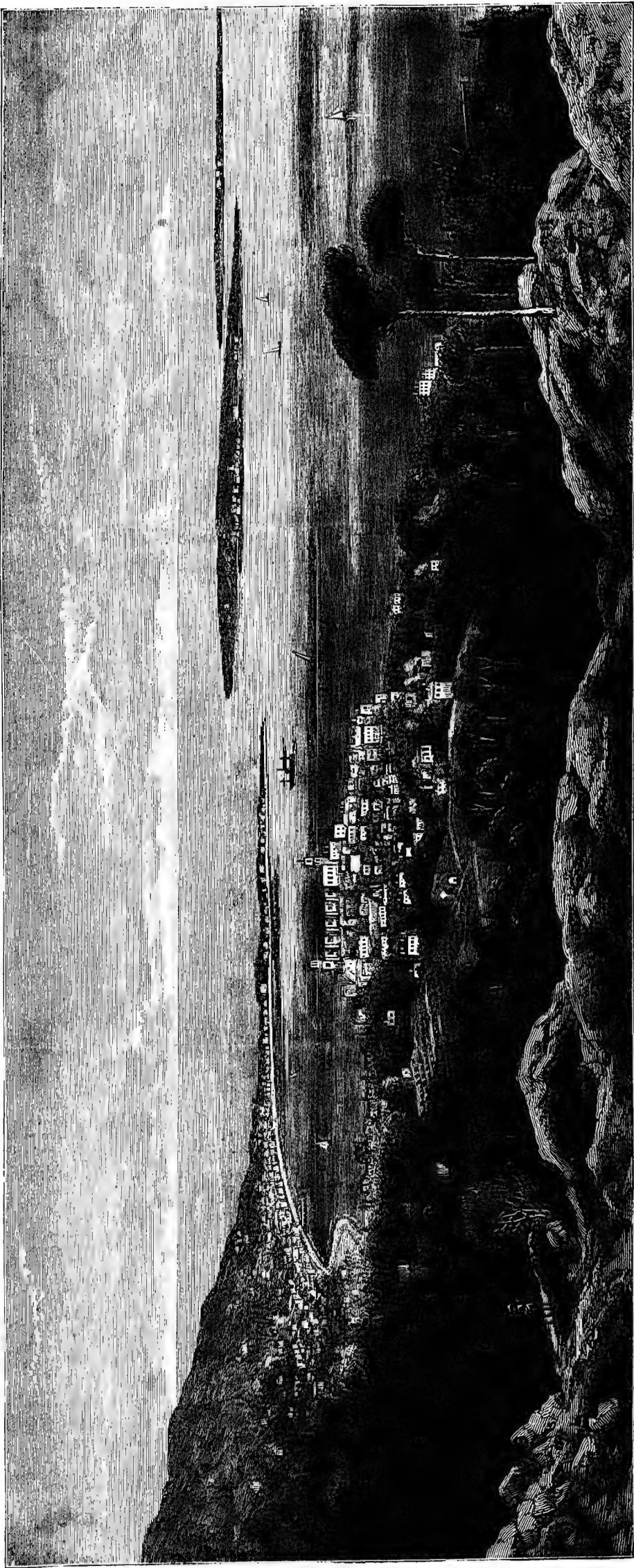
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WINTER HEALTH RESORTS ABROAD

CHRISTMAS CANDLES

*Yeux bleus vont aux Cieux ;
Yeux noirs au Purgatoire ;
Yeux gris au Paradis ;
Yeux verts à l'Enfer.*

FOUR little candles all afloat,
Red and green and blue and white,
Each in a little walnut boat,
By the fire on Christmas night.
Four little heads together bent,
Four little hands each lighting one,
Whose the candle soonest spent,
Her life shall be soonest done.
Christmas candles all alight,
Burning slow or burning fast,
Burning dim or burning bright,
Each must be burnt out at last.

Yeux bleus vont aux cieux
Little Blue Eyes, oh take care,
All four children hold their breath,
See, it flickers . . . out ! look there !
Blue Eyes, that means early death.
Where the snow falls soft and deep,
Now she lies in wind and sleet,
Eyes fast closed in dreamless sleep,
Resting with untired feet.
Christmas candles all alight,
Burning slow or burning fast,
Burning dim or burning bright,
Each must be burnt out at last.

Yeux noirs au purgatoire
Black Eyes, steady, what a flare
All the boat will be alight,
Little lady, oh beware,
That means danger, Christmas night.
Now she watches in the South,
Where the crimson sunsets burn,
Dreams he lightly kissed her mouth,
Waits—ah me, will he return ?
Christmas candles all alight,
Burning slow or burning fast,
Burning dim or burning bright,
Each must be burnt out at last.

Yeux gris au paradis
Grey Eyes, see, your light burns well,
Steadfast is the flame and pure,
Once it rose, and sank, and fell,
Rose again and burnt more sure.
Sweet Grey Eyes, a happy bride,
Now she passes down the street,
Where one long lost Christmastide
Went four pairs of little feet.
Christmas candles all alight,
Burning slow or burning fast,
Burning dim or burning bright,
Each must be burnt out at last.

Yeux verts à l'enfer
Hazel Eyes, your flame burns slow,
All the rest have burnt away ;
Child, your feet have far to go
Ere they rest from toil or play !
Many praise, some love, some blame,
Those deep hazel eyes to-day.
But some only name her name
When on Christmas night they pray
Christmas candles all alight,
Burning slow or burning fast,
Burning dim or burning bright,
Each must be burnt out at last.

U. ASHWORTH TAYLOR

THE CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS

FOR many weeks prior to the much-longed for Twenty-fifth of December, the youngsters live almost entirely upon slices of anticipation and tid-bits of hope. By the last day of November the shop-windows are in full Christmas costume, and these serve the double purpose of whetting the appetites of the juveniles and settling in the minds of adult relatives by what the said appetites shall be appeased. Toy-shops and sweet-stores are small Edens of delight behind glass panes, wherein the mind infantine may wander at will and find fresh pleasures at every step. Great grinning faces of cardboard smile over promontories of bulls'-eyes, and superintending the carresses of pipe-clay lovers is a huge dark face, with protruding tongue and globular ocular organs. Green glades of calico elm-trees, adorned with suburban terraces, composed wholly of sugar, cause the fancy to turn to "Gulliver's Travels" and the bright land Lilliput, where the mansions were dolls'-houses. It is a strange, great world, to say the least of it, and the childish imagination makes it stranger by converting the pink-nosed shop-lady, who will sell you a terrace for a shilling and a whole forest of green calico for a florin, into a favoured one whose avocation is only a remove from the heavenly, and who—to the childish eye—is the happiest human being extant. If little Freddy who has just turned ten had the privileges of that favoured shop-lady, how would he not revel in the delights of bulls'-eye promontories, great grinning faces, and balloons ! Freddy's mamma tells him he is going to be a great man one of these days, and Freddy's mamma is right, for he is. When he grows big he is going to sell calico forests like the pink-nosed shop-lady—at least, he thinks he is ; and he will then be the happiest little man alive—at least, he thinks he shall. All this, I can assure dear little Freddy, is very nice, and the big people who read these sentences understand it. But, bless you ! child, this is only the Children's Christmas. There is a time coming when you will smile at it all, and think yourself a very silly fellow for having thought of the sugar terraces and the joy of disposing of half-a-dozen at five per cent. discount.

Some of the most active ingredients in the composition of the season's good cheer are the Christmas Annuals. Christmas books and Christmas pictures occupy a large corner in the juvenile heart at this season. Freddy has his artistic favourites as well as his school ones ; and though he prefers the latter, the former have no mean places in his estimation. What a Fairyland of colour and design is the Picture World of the Children's Christmas ! Nothing sad, nothing bad ; everything funny, and beautiful, and good ! With the 1st of December sets in the tide of Christmas books.

I wonder if the boys and girls who read them were to see behind the scenes, and have a peep into author's study and artist's studio, and, from both, into printer's press-room, what they would think. Writing Christmas stories in summer ? They wouldn't believe it. Composing Christmas poetry in spring ? They would doubt your word. Drawing Christmas pictures a year or two in advance ? It couldn't be true. Lithographing them by a process something wrong. The mind infantine cannot form itself—save in rare instances—to any time or season but the present. But all I have said is true. Those who write or paint pictures do so when Freddy and his friends are little thinking about them. Freddy can't understand how that great, bright Christmas-Annual World of roaring fires, hard frosts, and knee-deep snow is the work of men who wrought with their windows open, and the thermometer at ninety-two in the shade. But such may often be the case.

The Children's Christmas is, unquestionably, the Christmas of good cheer. If the chits of ten and eleven were endowed with the power of placing on record their several impressions and experiences, what a literature of the Children's Christmas we should have ! We should have smart little ladies in pink frocks and white sashes, giving side-lights of juvenile society, with, perhaps, a tinge of satire, and, certainly, much good humour. What joys, hopes, and fears we should have committed to the safe keeping of imperishable print, and what infantine secrets we should behold in the clear light of criticism ! We should have a new school of fiction, in which the heroines would be under nine, and the heroes below the mature age of twelve. We should find a great wealth of detail, and an all-round hazy notion as to what the point of it was. There would be Christmas love intrigues, and Christmas fallings-out, and a general assortment of Christmas flirtations—all told by the children. Freddy, for example, would make some fearful admissions. Gas turned off during the ball ; crackers exploded under grandfather's arm-chair ; jam abstracted surreptitiously from the larder ; large slice of plum pudding discovered in a scrap of paper under a certain pillow—these are only a few of the items which would be each and all satisfactorily explained. Then the girls ; they would hardly escape free. If blessed with a Christmas literature from little lady pens, what tales we should have of little whims and jealousies, of poutings, tears, and kisses ! Little Annie—aged 10—would admit having hated little Minnie from the first, simply because at the children's party the latter wore a blue dress like her own ! It wasn't nice of her—Annie would write, I fancy—and little Minnie shouldn't have done it ; more especially as it was the Christmas season, when everybody is supposed to be good and kind to everybody else, and when there should be no cause for difference, and no spirit at the fireside other than that of good cheer. Ah, children ! it is your Christmas, and you may make the most of it. The next one will not be quite so pleasant ; the following will be a shade less enjoyable ; and the next—but the reader understands it all, and the writer of these sentences sorrowfully recollects that he himself is not so young as he once was.

W. T.



IN "JACK'S COURTSHIP: a Sailor's Yarn of Love and Shipwreck" (3 vols. : Sampson Low and Co.), Mr. W. Clark Russell tells the story of how, in consequence of a collision in mid ocean, a boat's crew from the sunken vessel had to take refuge on a desert island, and their subsequent rescue. There is no need to speak of the unflinching power and unflinching interest thrown by the author into all the adventures he describes, and not only into the adventures themselves but also into the ordinary details of the life whereof they form a portion. In his hands, a ship lives, just as she lives to a real sailor : and his sailors are very real indeed, and not in the least like the conventional article. There are passages in this novel, notably the life on the *Strathmore* while her doom is still in suspense, equal to anything that Mr. Russell has ever written ; and nothing could be said to their greater praise. On the other hand, he has been exceedingly ill advised to wait so long before carrying his characters, and his readers with them, to sea. Mr. Russell is never at home on shore, and love-making is anything but in his line, which is, we suppose, his reason for giving us so much of it, on the principle that a tragic actor always imagines himself a great comedian, and *vice versa*. If Florence Hawke, charming girl though she is, were knocked bodily out of the novel, and Jack had no sweetheart but his ship, the process would be all clear gain. Or, if that would be flying too much in the face of the absurd convention that a love plot is essential to fiction, the lady might disappear after the first chapter and only reappear to be married in the final one. Her presence makes the whole of the first volume a wearisome blunder. This must needs be said, so that the reader may not judge from that first volume as to the excellent things in store for him afterwards. These he cannot fail to enjoy : and all the more because their effect is obtained by the simplest means, and without any straining after sensation or fine writing.

"The White Witch," an anonymous novel (3 vols. : Bentley and Son), shows strong marks of having been written for some periodical in which it was considered essential to leave the reader in a state of breathless suspense or burning curiosity from week to week or from month to month. At any rate, it is exceedingly well adapted for such a purpose. The story does not amount to much, and, when all is over and cleared up, the aim and motive are alone left unrevealed and invisible. Interest is too ambitious a word to apply to "The White Witch" ; but then curiosity, excited at the outset, is never allowed to flag for an instant. It is full of mystery always promising to become sensational. Every detail is rendered *piquant* in this manner, from the possibility of the appearance of a ghost to a word casually discovered on a scrap of blotting paper. Of course this implies more than ordinary ingenuity—which is not the same thing as an artist's skill—in construction : and the novel thus becomes eminently readable, though less in three volumes than would have been the case in weekly numbers. Altogether, "The White Witch" is not first-class work, but is unquestionably clever and successful in its own way.

"One, and One Only, is the Lover's Creed" is the motto from Oliver Wendell Holmes prefixed by Mrs. Cashel Hoey to "The Lover's Creed" (3 vols. : Chatto and Windus) ; and it is about as appropriate as any other would have been. The real moral of the story is that one ought to write a plain, legible hand, and not make "Bassett" look like "Vassell." The story is unquestionably poor and pointless, but Mrs. Hoey's practised skill has been able to make a very fairly interesting tale out of meagre and ill chosen materials, as well as from such stock subjects as the official blunderings and confusions during the Crimean War. "The Lover's Creed" will not advance the reputation of its authoress, but it will not diminish it ; and on the whole it may be recommended as a novel distinctly above the general average, though not above that of Mrs. Hoey.

We have to acknowledge receipt of from "Post to Finish," by Captain Hawley Smart (3 vols. : Chapman and Hall), the serial which has recently appeared in these columns.

Owing to the many pressing demands upon our space, we are unable to do more than acknowledge the receipt of the following

novels and tales :—"On the Square" (Dublin : Hodges, Figgis, and Co.) ; "Loyal, Brave and True" by Alice O'Connell (3 vols. : J. and R. Maxwell) ; "Musical Snare" by Annabel Gray (J. and R. Maxwell) ; "Or Black or White" by Mrs. C. Hunter Hodgson (Griffith and Farran) ; "Fair Diana" by "Wanderer" (Bradbury, Agnew, and Co.) ; "Contrast," by Lady — (3 vols. : Remington and Co.) ; and "Judith Wynne," by C. L. Pirks (3 vols. : F. V. White and Co.)

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR'S BOOKS
IX.

SANTA CLAUS' big bag is nearly empty by now ; but a few books still remain to fill in the odd corners for the New Year. Possibly in these travelling days many people may be more familiar with famous foreign churches than with those of their own land, and so may be reminded to look nearer home by "The Cathedral Churches of England and Wales" (Cassell). Full justice is done here to the beauties of our British cathedrals, both by the numerous excellent engravings and the pleasant text, furnished by competent local authorities, while the work is thoroughly comprehensive, ranging from the mother church of English Christianity, Canterbury, to the newest See—Southwell. A little more care in editing, however, would have prevented the conflicting statements respecting the East windows at York and Carlisle.—One of the cathedral libraries is treated more fully in "Winchester," another of the illustrated is treated more fully in "The Diocesan histories." The Royal Christian Knowledge Society's Diocesan histories. The Royal Society of the early English Kings, in later days closely connected with the struggle between Sovereign and Parliament, claiming many famous men as her Bishops, from St. Swithin, of weather renown, to William of Winchester affords plentiful materials to her very competent biographer, the Rev. W. Benham.—For younger readers, prose and picture agreeably blend in "Chats About Germany," a fresh addition to Messrs. Cassell's "World in Pictures," where Magdalen Browne supplies a lively running commentary on the chief people, places, and customs of the Fatherland.—"Not half the world knows how the other half lives"—so goes the saying—and thus English juveniles may profitably learn how their foreign contemporaries spend their time from "The Children of All Nations" (Cassell). Enlarged from the original papers in *Little Folks*, this is a capital book for small people, and is full of pictures, like "The Children of China" (Hodder and Stoughton), where Miss Marston has neatly sugared over substantial and even somewhat dry facts. Actually, this is more a picturesque history of China and the Chinese than of the children alone ; but it is just the thing to interest the schoolroom. Indian children have their turn in "Punjab Nona" (Woolmer), by the Rev. S. Langdon, which sketches the spread of European education among the Ceylon natives ; and, though mainly concerned with the missionary side of the subject, affords some useful glimpses of native village life.

The quaint German fables of Reinhardt Fuchs and his craftiness have appeared in many different guises within the last six centuries, and tempted many a satiric pencil. Now Mme. de Sanctis provides a straightforward prose translation of "Reynard the Fox" (Swan Sonnenschein), where, however, Kaulbach's illustrations form the great attraction. Grotesque and keenly humorous, with an acute appreciation of the human nature in the various beasts, these drawings are fully worthy of the clever Teutonic artist.—British humour is represented by Lieut.-Colonel Secombe in "Comic Sketches from English History" (Allen), which depicts various historical events from a broadly-ludicrous point of view.—Fun, too, is the object of Mr. W. J. Hodgson's entertaining cuts to "Tom, the Piper's Son," and "There's many a Slip 'twixt Cup and Lip" (Hildesheimer and Faulkner), with Mr. F. Weatherly's verses ; while the same artist is well at home in the sporting scenes of "A Day with the Harriers" (same publishers), an extract from Mr. Burnard's famous "Happy Thoughts." Mr. Weatherly is also the poet for two more gracefully illustrated verse books for children, "Little Miss Marigold" and "The Song of the Bell" (Hildesheimer and Faulkner), wherein Jane Dealy and M. E. Edwards and J. C. Staples respectively supply the refined coloured and monochrome drawings.—Though not so artistic, Messrs. Dean's picture-books will probably please the nursery quite as well as those of more finished style, especially "Lady Tabitha's Morning Concert," by "E. O. A.," and "The Little Birds who Went Out to See the World," by "M. A. C.," both merry tales of pets.—"All in the Sun," by Mrs. C. Goddard ; "Cherry Pie," by W. Claudius and Mrs. Whitchurch ; and "Various Kinds of Bales in the Wool," by E. J. Taylor and T. H. Collins, portray childish doings in gay hues and easy verses.—Nursery audiences, too, must be glad of a few fairy tales to break the monotony of those everyday chronicles which form the majority of Christmas Books. So Mrs. Burton Harrison, in "The Old-Fashioned Fairy Book" (S. Low), treats in that good old fairy groove which has fascinated so many childish imaginations, and her plump little volume may be warranted to keep small fidgets as quiet as mice. Miss Rosina Emmet contrives some pretty cuts.—One other book has lately taken us among nursery-rhyme heroes and heroines, and now "Mabel in Rhymland" (Griffith and Farran), by E. Holland, journeys with these same celebrities to good King Arthur's Court and enjoys plenty of amusing adventures, fully illustrated by A. Chasemore.—Every tiny mite has told on her fingers the tale of the little pigs who went to market, but few knew what a romantic history was "The Great Story of the Three Little Pigs" (Ward, Lock). And a comic sequel it is to an evergreen legend, told right merrily by pen and pencil.

The remaining volumes rely more exclusively upon their literary merits. As often before, histories of large struggling families of hard-working girls form the food for feminine minds, such as "Warner's Chase," by Annie Swan, and "Down and Up Again," by Gregson Gow (Blackie), both suffering from bad illustrations.—Instead of drawing a heroine of romance in "Miss Fenwick's Failures" (Blackie), Esmé Stuart may be commended for producing a girl far more true to real life, who will put no nonsense into young heads, yet is interesting to read about.—So, indeed, is the story of the old maid of "Miss Jean's Niece" (Bemrose), whom the author of "Mlle. Mori" depicts with much charm, although she chooses a plot now well nigh threadbare.—There are some skilful touches also in "Two Stories of Two" (Griffith and Farran), where Stella Austin pictures a delightful baby couple, but grows stilted when dealing with her aristocratic hero, who receives the customary guerdon of young people in books—an early death.—Steadiness and keeping a promise gain their due reward in "Winnie's Secret" (Blackie), by K. Wood, and moral lessons for readers of a poorer grade are taught by "Loving Words" (Longley).—Decidedly amusing are the straits and struggles of "Three Sisters" (Sampson Low), whose efforts to obtain work and keep up appearances in a tiny German town are brightly pictured by Elsa d'Esterre Keeling. These light-hearted Irish girls bear just a suspicion of likeness to the familiar "Little Women," and this thought brings us to Miss Alcott herself. The American writer's "Spinning Wheel Stories" (S. Low) are just as vivacious and entertaining as we expect from her pen, and when read will certainly excite an Oliver Twist demand for "more."

Four other American productions, this time for the lads. On reading "The Adventures of Six Young Men" (Dean), English boys will be tempted to envy their Transatlantic cousins, who had such a "good time" roughing it in the wilds of Maine and Canada during their summer holidays among bears, catamounts, caribou, and other lively game. One of the six, C. A. Stephens, records their experiences in modest unvarnished terms and varied anecdotes,

and the illustrations render his narrative decidedly entertaining.—The companion volume, "Zig-Zag Journeys in the Western States of America" (Dean), by H. Butterworth, is mainly intended to point out the advantages of the West for emigration, but more nearly resembles a popular guide from Boston to San Francisco.—Mr. E. Eggleston's "Queer Stories for Boys and Girls" (Sampson Low), are conceived in a very happy vein; while gallant knights, distressed ladies, crafty monks, and bold robbers are skilfully compounded by Mr. F. Stockton into a stirring narrative of the days of St. Louis of France—"The Story of Viteau" (S. Low).—And "Cyril Hamilton" (Routledge), enjoys his due share of adventure on sea and land, in shipwreck and the Indian Mutiny, described in homely sailor-fashion by Lieutenant Low.—Ocean yarns, indeed, have abounded this winter, and now Mr. Clements Markham tells of real pioneers of discovery, "The Sea Fathers" (Cassell), from Prince Henry the Navigator down to the British sea-dogs of last century. The book is carefully compiled, but greatly needs a map and fuller index.—The career of another brave English sailor, "Robert Blake," drawn by the late Hepworth Dixon, is republished in handsome form by Messrs. Bickers, who reproduce in similar style the same author's "The Holy Land," enriched by some good photographs.—One of the boys' oldest friends will soon keep his jubilee, for "Peter Parley's Annual" (Ben George) now enters its forty-fifth year, and seems as brisk as ever. Adventures in foreign lands chiefly fill the pages, with a little wholesome knowledge intermixed.—As most boys like feathered pets Dr. Karl Russ's "The Speaking Parrots" (Upcott Gill) will not come amiss as a gift book. Thoroughly experienced in bird keeping, the author gives practical directions on the purchase and training of poor Poll, as well as the proper treatment in sickness and health, and plain descriptions of the various species. The manual is well translated by Leonora Schultze.—To pass from birds to beasts, Mr. Arthur Nicols furnishes entertaining details of animals' ways and habits in "Natural History Sketches Among the Carnivora" (Upcott Gill). The bigger carnivora, by the by, occupy a very small fraction of the contents, which mainly treat of dogs and their sagacity. A word for Messrs. J. T. Nettleship and C. Brittan's graphic drawings of lions and tigers.—In this connection we may mention some plain natural history talks with children—"Zoological Photographs," by J. Hassell (Sunday School Union), which forms a satisfactory elementary reading book.

Few celebrities escape being utilised for birthday or text books. Thus Miss G. Carland has ingeniously fitted verses by the American poet Whittier to parallel Scripture passages in "Text and Verse for Every Day in the Year" (S. Low).—Speaking of Scripture, a fresh series appears of "Mamma's Bible Stories" (Griffith and Farran), framed in the same simple style as the late Mrs. Daniel Wilson's original stories, but now compiled by the daughter for the grandchildren.—Another Sunday volume, "Good News for Children" (Woolmer), by the Rev. J. Colwell, puts religious truths into practical form to impress small minds, while for rather older readers the Rev. R. Newton tells the New Testament history in plain language as "The Light of the World" (Woolmer), drawing lessons from his texts and illustrating his arguments by episodes of real life.—Sunday School teachers will appreciate a revised edition of Vol. II. of the "Biblical Treasury" (Sunday School Union), brought up to later date by reference to recent researches in Bible lands, and which will greatly assist them in tuition and study.—Finally, kindly helpers at Christmas penny readings may find something to amuse their audience in Mr. R. Overton's "A Round Dozen" (Dean); while the little ones in their turn may be amused and gain a little political knowledge into the bargain by trying Messrs. Willis's ingenious new game of "Quorum; or, Court and Parliament," invented by T. Gregory, wherein figure the Queen, Prince of Wales, and such celebrities as Messrs. Gladstone, Bright, and Lord Randolph Churchill, to say nothing of the British Lion—who looks somewhat like a goat in the present portrait.

One of the handsomest gift books for the New Year is the new volume of the "Popular Edition of Picturesque Europe" (Messrs. Cassell and Co.), which is devoted to familiar scenes and resorts on the Continent. The work is replete with handsome engravings, both on wood and steel, illustrating the leading picturesque features of Normandy and Brittany, the Italian Lakes, the Alpine Passes, the Rhine, Venice, Rome, Northern Spain, and the Pyrenees. The engravings of Venice are particularly worthy of mention, while the illustration of the well-known Tour de l'Horloge at Rouen is one of the best representations of that picturesque old gateway which we have seen.

LONDON THEATRES, PAST AND PRESENT

THE fluctuations in the popularity of theatrical amusements may be noted by the number of theatres which have at different epochs been established in London. The reigns of Elizabeth and James I. were certainly the golden ages of the stage as they were of the drama, since with its then comparatively small population the metropolis possessed seven regular theatres, without reckoning several ruder erections and inn yards, where such representations were occasionally given. By the latter end of Charles II.'s reign, however, the number was reduced to four. Under Charles II. the almost universal Puritanism of the middle classes and the shameless dissoluteness of plays and players narrowed the stage to a Court amusement only, and even two theatres were found to be more than sufficient, as in 1682 the King commanded the two companies of Drury Lane and Dorset Gardens to amalgamate. Yet the fortunes of this one company, including as it did Betterton, Mrs. Barry, and Mrs. Bracegirdle, were so miserable, that in 1690 the Drury Lane patent was sold for 80*l*.! Five years afterwards a new house was opened in Portugal Street, Lincoln's Inn; but it was originally only an old tennis court, and was small in size and poorly fitted up. Sir John Vanbrugh erected a splendid theatre in the Haymarket on the same site now occupied by Her Majesty's, in 1705, when all to the north and west of that thoroughfare was meadow land. The "little theatre" on the opposite side was built in 1720. Covent Garden was raised by John Rich, or rather by a subscription of the nobility, in 1732, to take the place of tumble-down old Lincoln's Inn, which was then finally abandoned. In the same year a silk throwster's shop in Goodman's Fields was converted into a theatre, and it was there, in 1741, that Garrick made his first appearance upon the public stage, though he had previously played as an amateur in the old room, little changed since then, over St. John's Gate, Clerkenwell. About the middle of the century, entertainments, half musical, half theatrical, began to be given in a building at the then fashionable Spa of Sadler's Wells.

The Licensing Act of 1737, which strictly limited the metropolitan theatres to two, though it was frequently evaded by the smaller houses, put a decided check upon theatrical expansion. Later on, in 1767, Foote obtained a patent for the Haymarket, which authorised him to play during the four summer months of each year when the great houses were closed. Between 1780 and 1790 three more places for theatrical and equestrian entertainments were opened—Astley's Amphitheatre, the Surrey, and the Royalty in Wellclose Square, where Braham made his first appearance. During the earlier decades of the present century several others sprang up: the Olympic was built by Philip Astley for a circus in 1804, and opened by Elliston as a theatre in 1813; the Sanspareil, now the Adelphi, and the Tottenham Street house, now the Prince of Wales's, were opened in 1806; the Lyceum in 1816 (the present building dates from 1834), the St. James's in 1835, the Princess's 1841, and others, the very names of which are forgotten.

Up to the end of the last century the managers of the patent houses waged a war of extermination against all who dared to encroach upon their privileges. At length, however, the powers that were began to realise the impracticability of maintaining this rigid monopoly in the ever-growing capital; but as nobody proposed to repeal the Act of Parliament, a compromise was effected; the minor houses, as they were now called, were permitted to play pantomime, melodrama, and farce, all of which were comprehended under the general title of burlettas, and were prescribed to contain at least three or four musical numbers; but every play belonging to the repertory of the patent theatres was strictly prohibited.

This curious arrangement continued in force until, thanks principally to the exertions of Madame Vestris, the patent monopoly was repealed, and Free Trade in the drama finally established. The minor theatres were originally of the most makeshift description: a couple of old houses, perhaps one, as in the case of the Sanspareil, was gutted, a small stage raised at one end, and a couple of tiers, called boxes and gallery, at the other; if the speculation was successful, improvements and enlargements were made at intervals, until the place gradually assumed the orthodox aspect. Others, like Astley's, the Surrey, the Olympic, the Tottenham Street were originally wooden circuses, with very little better accommodation than the travelling ones that are now put up in a few hours.

One need not be past the middle age to remember something of the old style of theatre, with its dirt and stuffiness, its close low-ceiled boxes with their long undivided seats, upholstered in such a way that they were harder than wood, the dingy bombazine hangings, cradles for dust, the villainously tasteless decorations, the pit with its backless wooden forms, and whitewashed or yellow ochred walls, coatings of which were nightly carried away by the audience. The stage was little better. The old dingy "flats" that so persistently refused to meet, and that were stained all over with the dirty fingers of the scene shifters; the nobleman's drawing-room carpetless, and furnished with three rickety chairs and a gilt *papier maché* table; the ragged "borders" that represented the sky or a ceiling, and the open wings which stood for woodland paths or the walls of a room—such scenic defects were common at the best of the West End theatres. There certainly were brilliant exceptions, as when Macready ruled at the great houses, Madame Vestris at the Lyceum, and Charles Kean at the Princess's; but they were only exceptions. The reform of the English stage really commenced with Fechter's management at the Lyceum. It was Fechter who introduced the sunken footlights, who abolished the old absurdity of "wings" and shifting "flats," and gave us built scenes in their place; and who, above all, infused the poetic spirit, as distinguished from mere glitter of Dutch metal and glaring finery, into stage pictures. The movement was worthily carried on by George Vining during his lesseeship of the Princess's in such productions as *It's Never Too Late to Mend* and *The Huguenot Captain*; by the Bancrofts at the Prince of Wales's, and it has reached what would seem to be its culminating point under the present management of Drury Lane, the Princess's, and the Lyceum. Yet, although these houses take the lead in the magnificence of their "get-ups," an almost equal perfection, in proportion to the style of plays, is to be found in almost every other West End theatre, while those situated in the unfashionable parts of the town imitate them as closely as their resources will permit. Then what luxury we have before the curtain, though in that respect the reform is of much more recent date. Contrast the Empire, the Prince's, the Savoy, which are certainly the model theatres, with Drury Lane and the Princess's, twenty years ago; or the Grand, at Islington, with the Sadler's Wells of Phelps' time; not only have we bodily comfort, which can only be increased by the general substitution of electric lighting for gas, but the artistic eye can rove over the entire area without being shocked by horrible incongruities, barbarous conflicts of colours, and tawdry finery.

Yet, however well disposed managers might have been to provide magnificent entertainment and accommodation for their audiences, they would have been powerless but for the wonderful increase in public patronage which has marked the theatrical history of the last ten years. After the earlier decades of the seventeenth century the middle-class English were so leavened with the spirit of Puritanism that the theatre depended for support almost entirely upon the caprices of the fashionable world, so that until within the last seventy or eighty years it was the amusement of what was scarcely more than a clique, and for a hundred and fifty years even two houses had at times a hard struggle for existence; Garrick in his zenith knew what it was to play to five pounds a night. With the rise of the minor theatres, at the commencement of the present century, the working classes first began to be playgoers; but still whole sections of the middle classes never entered a playhouse. Most of us can remember the time when the theatre was a subject not to be introduced in strange company without first feeling the way, and ascertaining whether there were any present who objected to such amusements. I remember when I was little more than a boy inducing a companion, the son of rigid Dissenting parents, to go with me clandestinely to the play; as he entered the house I could feel him actually tremble, I saw him cast a timid look around, as though he half expected to see "the wicked old gentleman" himself occupying one of the seats, and had it not been for me I feel sure that he would have turned and fled before the curtain rose. It was curious to watch his scared looks as the play commenced—it was that powerful French melodrama, *Pauline*, played by Charles Kean at the Princess's—and his gradual yielding to the spell until he became utterly enthralled in the strange weird story. He had never known such an absorbing delight in all his life before. But when it was over came the thought of the dread scrape it was my duty to help him out of it. I accompanied him home, confessed the sin, and took the blame upon myself. His mother was very shocked; our friendship was not forbidden, but she took care the offence was not repeated. But when his sisters, young women from eighteen to five-and-twenty, got us boys alone they were dying to hear about that forbidden place; they listened eagerly but deprecatingly; they would not have witnessed a play for the world, the very thought made them shiver, but they were very eager to hear about it. All this happened less than thirty years ago, yet it will read like ancient history in these days when everybody, young or old, is at least an occasional playgoer, when in almost all circles actors and plays are a favourite topic of conversation, and clergymen are to be seen sitting undisguised in boxes, stalls, and even pits of high-class houses. Other reforms in the front of the house, which Macready during his brief management first had the courage to initiate, besides those already referred to, have had much to do with the disappearance of such ancient prejudices; youths and young girls can be taken to most of our theatres without being brought face to face with vice in its coarsest and most revolting features. The social evil may be present, but it has to suppress itself, and conform to the rules of respectability. And while the middle classes are now among the strongest supporters of the drama, fickle fashion, after generations of contemptuous indifference, has forsaken the opera-house and gone back to its earlier love, and actors and actresses, whose social qualities entitle them to such privileges, are respected guests at aristocratic houses.

Theatres, however, have not multiplied so greatly as most people imagine; while reckoning the new ones that have been recently built they forget the old that have disappeared, to mention only the built they forget the old that have disappeared, to mention only the Queen's, the Prince of Wales's, the Holborn, the Grecian, the Victoria, the Park (Camden Town), the East London, the Albion

(Poplar). Indeed, so far from there having been an increase there has been a diminution. Ten years ago London possessed forty-two theatres, now it has only thirty-six or thirty-seven. West End theatres have increased, while the outlying ones have decreased; a process of natural selection has been at work, and resulted in the survival of the fittest.

H. B. B.



LATE in the last century a young Artillery officer, Captain Benjamin Bloomfield, who had served with some little distinction in America and in the Irish Rebellion, was stationed at Brighton, where his troop was working with the Prince of Wales's regiment, then the 10th Light Dragoons. At a field-day the Prince of Wales was so pleased with the way in which the Captain handled his troop that he asked him to dinner. After dinner there was music, and the young officer, "who was a proficient on the violoncello, struck some chords which delighted the Prince Regent, and thus began a friendship that lasted uninterruptedly for twenty-seven years." The Artillery officer was first appointed Gentleman Attendant, then Equerry and Clerk Marshal, then Private Secretary and Privy Purse. In 1816 he was sent to Paris to carry the Order of the Bath to the generals of our army; in 1823 he was raised to the peerage as Baron Bloomfield, and was appointed Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at the Court of Bernadotte, King of Sweden. In 1833 he left Sweden, and he died in 1846. Such is the story, told with simplicity and brevity by Georgiana Lady Bloomfield (daughter-in-law to the first Baron, and widow of the second Baron Bloomfield, with whom the title became extinct) in her introduction to the "Memoir of Benjamin Lord Bloomfield, G.C.B., G.C.H." (2 vols.: Chapman and Hall). The introductory biography of the British Minister in Sweden is followed by one on Bernadotte, translated from the French. It contains some obvious inaccuracies; among others the statement that Nelson bombarded Copenhagen and captured the Danish fleet in 1808, three years after the battle of Trafalgar. But the greater part of the book is composed of extracts from the diaries, letters, and despatches of Lord Bloomfield while he held office at the Court of Bernadotte. Lord Bloomfield was, without doubt, a man of high principle, and if his diplomacy was not brilliant, it was usually successful. But his character appears to have been a very ordinary one; and his diaries and letters are remarkably like those of our school days, in which we find, when we look at them in mature years, that we have assiduously entered everything that was of no moment, and have omitted most that we should like to remember. His lordship often tantalises us by saying of distinguished persons whom he saw:—"Met so and so, and had an animated conversation lasting over an hour," though concerning what the distinguished person said, and how he looked, he is absolutely dumb. On the other hand, there are several interesting reports of conversations with Bernadotte (of whose personality, however, we should gain but a shadowy idea from these formal volumes), and the student of modern European history may pick out here and there a fact of importance. A worthy book, though a dull one. Lady Bloomfield could have compiled a much more interesting work from the diaries of the late peer during the long time that he was the King's private secretary, the very period which she dismisses here with the briefest notice.

Dr. Smiles has made for himself quite a unique reputation as the chronicler of men possessing in a high degree some of the humbler mental qualities—the men of mechanism. His last book, "Men of Invention and Industry" (John Murray) is somewhat fragmentary, and has not quite the interest of his single biographies. Nevertheless it is worth reading, and if given away as a prize at boys' schools will doubtless stimulate many a youngster to emulate Phineas Pett, the beginner of English ship-building; Francis Smith, the inventor of the screw propeller; or Walter, the inventor of the steam printing-press. Dr. Smiles tells again with much detail the well-known story of the foundation of the *Times* and the invention of the Walter Press. To our mind the most interesting chapters in the book are those on industry in Ireland. It is not so much Bianconi and his cars for which we care; but Dr. Smiles's own remarks on a tour he undertook in Ireland last year. He comments (as Arthur Young commented long before him) on the neglected state of the Irish fisheries, gives the history of the Ulster linen trade, and points to the increased wealth of Ireland and the growing thrift of the people. His conclusion is hopeful: "Looking to the increasing means of the country, and the well-known industry of its people, it seems reasonable to expect that with peace, security, energy, and diligent labour of head and hand, there is really a great future before Ireland."

The greater number, if not all, of the papers forming "Above the Snow Line" (Longmans), by Mr. Clinton Dent, Vice-President of the Alpine Club, have, we believe, already appeared in different numbers of the "Journal" of the Alpine Club. But they are very well worth republishing; and recast and re-written as they are, they form one of the pleasantest books on Alpine climbing. To the persons who look on Alpine climbing with apathy or derision—the persons who think climbers go up mountains for the sake of the view from the top—Mr. Dent's book will not appeal; but to the genuine climber it will afford the greatest pleasure. Mr. Dent is content to class himself among the past generation of mountaineers, and he has not, perhaps, accomplished such noteworthy ascents as some other well-known Alpine men. The first ascent of the Aiguille du Dru is the chief feat recorded in "Above the Snow Line," and for the persistency and skill with which this peak was repeatedly attacked and ultimately conquered Mr. Dent and his guides deserve the greatest credit. But his book is not so much noteworthy as a record of historic first ascents—though from this point it does not lack interest—as for the genuine passion for the sport of mountaineering which every page reveals, and for the humour with which the narrative is everywhere illumined. His remarks on the dangers of mountaineering, and the necessity of paying proper attention to the rules of the game, are most wise, and they should be laid to heart by all young climbers. The book is never dull; adventures, anecdotes, and jests are on every page. It is human, skilful, and humorous; and if all Alpine climbers were of Mr. Dent's sort, we think that Mr. Ruskin would at once modify his recent hard sayings about Swiss mountaineering.

Mr. W. H. Mallock would be more interesting if only we could feel sure of his sincerity. He is certainly an ingenious writer; he has some command of style; he has read widely if superficially; and he is capable enough in certain forms of argument. But from the days of the "New Republic" onward he never seems to have been in earnest. He is continually extolling the pleasures of faith without himself possessing them; he declares the Roman Church to be the only rational Church, yet is not himself, we believe, in its communion. He argues much as Bishop Blougram argued with "Gigadibs, the literary man;" but he argues without the Bishop's faith and without his tolerance and urbanity. In his last book, "Atheism and the Value of Life" (Bentley and Son), Mr. Mallock is again at his old enemies, the men of science; and his review of the



work of the late Professor Clifford is perhaps the ablest paper of the five which compose the volume. All who knew Professor Clifford will be glad to find that Mr. Mallock does full justice to the great attractions of his character and the personal charm of his manner; and the idle story that the scientific prig Saunders, of the "New Republic," was intended for a portrait of the late Professor of Applied Mathematics at University College may now finally be laid aside. The other papers in the volume are on "Tennyson Under the Shadow," "George Eliot on the Human Destiny," "Natural Religion," and "Atheistic Methodism." The burden is the same in all—that theism is necessary for man; that the scientific thinkers are but groping in the dark; and that they owe all that is best in their creed to the beliefs which they have themselves repudiated, and the existence of which they are now attempting to destroy.

Lady Pollock's bright and interesting little book, "Macready As I Knew Him" (Remington and Co.), should be read by all who yet hold in their minds any recollections of the great actor. Unpretentious as the book is, it will do much to remove the unpleasant impression left by Macready's own "Reminiscences," in which he exhibited to the public the worst side of his character—his gloom, his over-sensitiveness, and his ill-temper. Macready was without doubt a noble character, and in his published diaries he has done himself much the same sort of injustice as Carlyle more recently committed against himself in the "Reminiscences." Lady Pollock had ample opportunities of studying Macready's character at leisure. She often saw him on the stage, and, with her husband, she was in the habit of visiting him in his country retirement at Sherborne, where, away from the theatre, where he was always ill at ease, Macready's fine qualities of mind had the best opportunities for displaying themselves.

Mr. Charles Dickens has added to the number of his useful dictionaries "The Dictionary of the University of Cambridge" and "The Dictionary of the University of Oxford" (Macmillan and Co.). Both are arranged exactly on the same plan as the well-known Dictionaries of the Thames and of London (new editions of which have lately been issued). No point of importance seems to have been omitted, and the information conveyed is full and complete. Freshmen at either University will find these dictionaries very useful. The compiler often goes beyond the bare record of facts, and adds entertaining little essays. There is a suspicion of fun in many of his entries; as, for example, in this, at the close of the section on "Costume":—"Members of the Senate are free in the matter of head-equipment; they may either use a cap or a high hat, or even a soft felt. There is no case on record of a Master of Arts wearing a billycock with his gown."

"The Social Code," compiled by George Ager, LL.D. (Eftingham Wilson), is a very complete system of code-words for reducing the cost of telegraphy. No common forms of expression seem unprovided for, and words are allotted for special expressions. Numbers, days of the month, and sums of money have all their special code-words.

Of new editions and minor works we have only space to mention the new edition of "Norfolk Broads and Rivers," by G. Christopher Davies (W. Blackwood and Sons), which has achieved a well-deserved popularity. Of the two new volumes of "Morley's Universal Library," one contains a translation of Voltaire's "Candide," and Doctor Johnson's "Rasselas;" the other a collection of Mediaeval Tales, including Turpin's "History of Charles the Great" and "Orlando," Tales from the "Gesta Romanorum," and the famous history of "Doctor Faustus" (Routledge and Sons). We have also received a translation of Max O'Rell's "John Bull's Womankind" (Field and Tuer), which, unlike Mr. Morley's reproductions, is decidedly unexpurgated. Messrs. Blackwood have sent us a "Third Standard Reader" of their Educational Series, which appears to be better illustrated than the majority of these works, and contains tales and essays fitted to interest young children. Another work of the same series is "A Complete History of England for Junior Classes," edited by Professor Meiklejohn, which certainly gives an immense amount of information in the briefest possible space. Yet a new culinary work is "Myra's Cookery Book," which is especially intended for those beginners who require a book to which they can instantly refer whilst preparing a dish. "Myra" tells them in the fewest possible words what ingredients are needed, together with the quantities, and all necessary details. The information is given in a tabular system—most convenient for hasty reference (*Myra's Journal Publishing Office*). A useful series of "Seven Civil Service Copy Books," together with a "Correspondent's Book of Official Letters," have been forwarded by Mr. John Faulkner, 53, Upper Sackville Street, Dublin. They have evidently been prepared with great care, and are especially graduated to suit the requirements of the different classes of pupils. The "Correspondent's Book" will be found especially useful to those in training for Government examinations.

AN EVENING WITH TAFFY

AP-JONES'S, where we are staying, is in the heart of the Welsh mountains—a large stone house at the end of a *cul-de-sac*, with precipitous rocks on three sides; with a brawling trout stream rushing past the door, and seven miles to jolt along a ramshackle road before you reach the nearest post-office. Ap-Jones is proprietor of the valley through which the road runs, "Lord of the Manor," as the natives describe him in eloquent moments, when they feel themselves to be within measurable distance of gratuitous whisky. Not that his name is Ap—that is merely a concession to his surroundings, forced upon him by his friends, but, fortunately for him, it really is Jones, a fact which he tells us has been worth at least a hundred a year to him since the time when he first forsook calico-printing, and turned farmer and cattle breeder in this Sleepy Hollow.

The harvest is in, and Taffy is coming up with his wife to spend the evening at the house in celebration of the event. We have seen something and heard more of Taffy during the past week, and are looking forward to the gathering. We have hitherto interviewed him singly, and when at work. His sibilant pronunciation of English, and the impartiality with which he distributes accent, determining that every accent shall share and share alike, have become familiar to us. So has the power he displays of leaning on an agricultural implement in the attitude of exertion. So have his praises of Ap-Jones. We have heard of such a thing as clanship existing in the Principality, but the feeling of subdued antagonism which it produces against the foreigner does not extend to Ap-Jones—at least, according to Taffy's account. Ap-Jones's money is paid regularly, and his wages are, perhaps, a shade higher than those paid by native cultivators, thanks to the representation of his Welsh right-hand man, who has acquired Ap's favour by the extreme ferocity with which he harangues the labourers in their own tongue, and the black looks which they (in public) cast upon him. They may be clanish, but the feeling does not extend to the driving of capital away. Its exercise is reserved as a bulwark against the intrusion of foreign labour. Should a misguided Irishman poke his nose into this happy valley in search of work, the whole neighbourhood—if the scattered cottages along the valley can be termed a neighbourhood—is up in arms at once. No one will give him house-room, and by hook or by crook they will tease him out of the place. Ap-Jones tells us he once engaged a Scotch bailiff, but, clever as he was, he was no match at all for Taffy.

There was no open revolt, but they offered, against his activity and reforming zeal, an amount of inertia that finally broke his heart and drove him over the border.

However, here is Taffy in person, and his wife, and we must attend to them. They are marshalled by the stout cowkeeper, who is evidently the Beau Nash of the valley and the reigning authority on etiquette, as it is upon his hint that salutations are given, first to Mr., and then to Mrs. Ap, and finally to us visitors. The spacious farm-house kitchen is already prepared, the beef is on the table, and the plum pudding, about the size of an average bolster, is ready to follow; the robust young Welsh curate from the little church over the mountain gives us leave to begin, and we all fall to. Taffy is somewhat shy at starting, and his wife still shyer. They look at Ap Jones at the head of the table as though they had been his vassals and he their liege lord through the centuries, and a recognition of the fact beams in Ap's eye, and gives him all the dignity of the patriarch Abraham. But Taffy's swarthy countenance grows one shade lighter with each succeeding pound of beef, and he sends up his plate each time with increasing confidence. So bold, indeed, do he and Mrs. Taffy grow by the time the bolster makes its appearance that they need no encouragement to conversation, and pass the black-jack around with fast-diminishing embarrassment. Taffy, we note, need fear comparison with no one in his capacity for a good square meal. After the disappearance of the solids, the orator of the valley, the Welsh foreman, offers a few remarks, with as much aplomb as if he had been "Drinking the Ladies" all his life; and with the due allowance of "whatevers" and "whichevers," in congratulation of the harvest, and in comment on the happy lot of a contented peasantry, and the virtues of Mr. and Mrs. Ap Jones. Ever and anon the speaker is interrupted by rumbling sounds, as though the room were for a moment put in telephonic communication with Mount Vesuvius, but we eventually recognise that the sounds proceed from the throat of Taffy, and that this is his method of expressing his approval. Then, after a modest rejoinder from Ap, who hopes that they will all enjoy themselves as much as possible, we all turn to and drag the big table to one side of the room.

The object of the manoeuvre is not at first apparent to us, but we are speedily enlightened. Taffy is to be encouraged to enjoy himself, and to this end must have a clear floor to dance upon. Two of him go out of the room, amid the jokes of the rest, and, with solemn tread, return, carrying between them a barrel organ. A barrel organ in the heart of the Welsh mountains! How it got there no one appears to know, but there it is, the pride of the valley and the joy of its shepherd owner, who, by virtue of its possession, is a welcome guest wherever festivity rears its head. It is a well-preserved instrument, of not more than twenty years of age, plays several substantial tunes from the Union Tune Book, the Old Hundredth, "Rule Britannia," and "Slap, bang, here we are again." Though it has passed its prime, and has retired to this comparatively private life, it is still quite capable of "eliciting something resembling an air." Taffy and his wife are by this time thoroughly at home, and ready for enjoyment after their fashion. It is the fashion for the feminine Taffys to get all together in a heap in one corner, within each reach of light refreshment, and to sit there silent admirers of their husbands and sweethearts. The big table and the ladies being thus out of the way, the floor is clear for Taffy, who forthwith commences to indulge in the national dance. The national dance is conducted as follows:—Taffy takes the centre of the floor, plants his fists in his hips, closes his mouth firmly, looks unspeakable things at the ceiling, and commences to hop upon one foot, striking the ground at intervals with the other. This dance has the happy property of fitting in with any tune on the barrel organ that its player may choose. Perfect silence reigns during the performance, and as one minute after another elapses, the tension of excitement in the mind of the stranger as to when the man will faint and be carried out grows great. But after ten minutes' hopping Taffy No. 1 retires, evidently from politeness, and not fatigue, and amid a murmur of satisfaction, to make way for Taffy No. 2, who repeats the same programme to a fresh tune. After him we get a little change. Ap-Jones asks for a native song, and one being selected which goes *tant bien que mal* with the Old Hundredth on the organ, we get it. Then we get twenty minutes' more toe-tapping, and after that a glee. We all greatly applaud the glee, and, on the strength of our applause, Taffy, grown bold, gets the foreman to hint to Ap that a wee taste of spirits would greatly help to settle the previous beer. Ap yields, and the consequences are soon manifest. In place of one Taffy, eight male Taffys take the floor simultaneously, and dance something resembling a morris dance, only with a short allowance of morris. Each man produces his handkerchief, or borrows his wife's, and, after a certain amount of hopping, with the handkerchief held in the air, comes handkerchiefs across and down the middle, followed by a little more hopping, and then *da capo*. Why Mrs. Taffy was excluded we know not, but the possibility of a woman's dancing never seemed to enter Taffy's head. After the morris dance we get more songs and glees, and solos on the organ. And here one of the guests, a youth from London, overcome by the spirit of the scene and the persuasions of his malicious hostess, feels impelled to do "something to oblige the company." His accession to the ranks of entertainers is looked on rather dubiously at first by Taffy, but his good opinion is speedily won by a comic song with a "La-di-dah" chorus, which he takes to like a duck to water; and when the youth, feeling himself thoroughly in for it, proceeds so far as to dance a hornpipe, Taffy's enthusiasm knows no bounds, and he beams upon the stranger with such evident hero-worship that the latter feels he is just the man for Wales. Growing reckless, he bethinks him of an old-fashioned piece of parlour magic, and, after asking for the lights to be put out, he enters the room with a dish of burning spirits, mixed with salt. The well-known lugubrious effect of the light in giving every one a corpse-like countenance had never been seen by Taffy, and, chiming in with his slightly superstitious nature, it gave him the crowning sensation of the evening.

Thoroughly warmed up, and slightly incoherent, Taffy now takes his departure, receiving a friendly warning from the foreman as to the next day's work. Mrs. Taffy follows at a respectful distance. We stroll with Ap in the moonlight, up and down his garden, by the side of the rushing stream. The grand mountains look down upon us, and the keen night wind whistles by, while dying away in the distance is "Rule Britannia," borne in triumph by the two Taffys who are surest of their legs. R. T. G.

SOMETHING CHRISTMASSY

"SOMETHING Christmassy." Quite so! but, in what form? You see, the editorial eye, "in fine frenzy rolling," may take such a totally different view of the matter from that of—let me say, the advertising cheap wine merchant, who, from the love that he bears to his specie, if not to his species, offers us his assorted guinea hamper as an indispensable accompaniment to the festive season, for which, he tells us, "it forms the most appropriate present."

Festive, quotha! ha, ha! For the modest outlay of twenty-one shillings he offers to provide me—bottles and hamper included—with one bottle of champagne, one ditto claret, one ditto port, one ditto sherry, one ditto brandy, one ditto gin, one ditto whisky, and one ditto rum. Now, suppose that I yield myself a slave to this cheap temptation, and, regardless of dyspepsia and doctors' bills, set the contents of my hamper as being something Christmassy before my Christmas guests, and as purporting to be the precious samples

of the unlimited vinous contents of my most capacious cellars. How am I to proceed? Should we, as revellers at the festive board, open the campaign by opening the bottle of champagne, so far as it will last round; and then proceed to clear off the ditto of claret; and follow up with the other dittoes in dreadful succession, until the contents of the hamper were, like ourselves, exhausted? or would it be better to toss up for the dittoes, and each person to keep to his own bottle, to obviate the ill effects that would probably arise from the commingling of diverse fluids? Perhaps the latter plan would be the best—unless, like Pindar, we philosophically deemed water to be the best—for it would be less calculated to make "The Christmas guest To beat his breast When he heard the loud bassoon;" and he might be reduced to this Coleridgian treatment when he listened to the Christmas waits playing, blatantly and discordantly, outside the window.

Those same waits, by the way—waits whose measures we do not fully appreciate—would regard as something Christmassy the monetary "tips" that are bestowed upon them; and so would a great number of others—beadles, dustmen, handbell ringers, sweeps, and postmen. And, let us hope that the *largesse* granted to them, whether liberally or scurvily, cheerfully or grudgingly, may do something towards cheering and brightening their prosaic lives at the joyous season of goodwill to man. Christmas can only come but once a year; and yet it may be made to govern the whole twelvemonth.

In the grocer's ideal of something Christmassy, we should find large and fragrant supplies for the making of plum puddings and mince pies, with sugar and spice and all that's nice, currants and raisins, lemons and oranges, cloves and citrons; while his neighbour, the confectioner, would load us with lovely boxes of bonbons, plums, figs, chocolate, ginger, truffles, potted game, Perigord pâtés, Yorkshire pies, and all sorts of good and appetising dainties. The fruiterer contributes to Christmas a vast and tempting variety of edibles, from the expensive pine to the cheap chestnut that will be roasted in the fire, where the Yule-log throws its shower of sparks whirling up the chimney. The fishmonger, the poultryer, and game dealer would supplement these with their own versions of something Christmassy, in the shape of turbot, cod, oysters, prawns, pheasants, hares, turkeys, geese, ducks, fowls, and many other things that we are glad to see among our Christmas fare; while the butcher would vaunt as necessities of existence at this season his huge joints of beef and mutton, which possibly may have been portions of blue-ribbon winners at Smithfield, Birmingham, and other cattle shows.

Then, besides the creature comforts for the public, whether provided at "the public" by goose-clubs or otherwise, there would be something Christmassy to be expected from the toy-dealer, with all the pretty nic-nacs for the Christmas trees; and the stationers' shops festively gay with their multitudinous Christmas cards, and the various mottoes, shields, banners, and other devices for the Christmas decorations of churches; and the mistletoe boughs and holly and ivy bushes, and all other Christmas foliage, from the "burnished leaves, so fresh and clear," to the "berries with their ripe-red gleam," of which Keble speaks. And, if something Christmassy is expected to be seen on the walls of churches and chapels, we know that something correspondingly Christmassy will be expected from the preachers therein. Doubtless they have already had to see to their Christmas coal and clothing clubs—to the distribution of blankets, flannel, tea, sugar, and other gifts from their patrons and Ladies Bountiful—and to various other charities that mark the sacred season as one peculiarly devoted to acts of benevolence.

Then something Christmassy in the way of entertainments will have to be considered for the enlivenment of the Christmas holidays, when the young ones are at home from school and college. Except in provincial towns, the old-fashioned pantomime would seem to be a thing of the past, and only to be seen at Drury Lane or transportation theatres; but there are concerts and penny readings, and balls and Cinderella dances, and children's parties and Twelfth Night suppers, and snap-dragon and Punch and Judy, and conjurers and private theatricals. For something Christmassy may be regarded from many points of view that may change from one to the other with kaleidoscopic variety.

Here, too, are the welcome Christmas numbers of magazines and newspapers, with their coloured prints. What a debt of gratitude do we not owe to these attractive pictures from the designs of such artists as Millais, Phil Morris, Calderon, Holl, Briton Riviere, Burton Barber, Morgan, and others. Among other uses to which these pictures can be devoted—such as screens—I have had them varnished and put in stout oak "Oxford" frames, and hung on the walls of a village school-room, which they have transformed into the semblance of a pretty drawing-room; and, while they have made bare walls look attractive, they have proved to be a daily pleasure and an art education to the cottage children who have been the scholars. Thus "something Christmassy" in its origin has kept up its good service through the whole year.

Which is a wholesome lesson to be learned by scholars of all ages, from the season that brought peace on earth, good will to man.

CUTHBERT BEDE

THE FIRST ROBIN

THE bleak winds blow, and the winter snow,
Is mantled o'er valley and woodland wide;
And the pools are crowned with their ice coats sound,
Upon whose surface the children glide.
And the skies are grey, and the branches sway
Like skeletons stripped of their vernal pride

And the Snow-King comes to our various home
With an iron will and a stern command,
And rules the world, while he holds unfurled
His banner of snow in his palsied hand.
And strikes a chill, that is wont to kill,
To the hearts of many a human band.

And the robin sings, as he swiftly wings
His flight 'cross many a barren wold;
And seeks the door of the shivering poor,
Who dread the pangs of the winter cold.
And his song imparts, to their aching hearts,
A little of comfort and cheer untold.

From the trembling spray, his roundelay
The first red robin of winter trills,
As he heralds in, 'mid the strife and din,
The hoary monarch from o'er the hills;
The Winter King, with his icy sting,
With his scanty joys and his countless ills.

And to rich and poor, for the crumbs in store,
The robin cometh on trembling wings;
And amid the snow, and the winds that blow,
His carol of winter he sweetly sings.
Oh! may his song, as he soars along,
Lessen the hearts of a thousand stings.

II. II. A.

THE LOUIS VELVETEEN.

"LE FOLLET" says:—The LOUIS VELVETEEN has already rejoiced in a longer reign in the world of fashion than that of any material within our recollection; and when we take into consideration that it is equally suitable for all occasions—an advantage no other fabric possesses—and that, whether employed as a complete dress, portions of toilettes, or trimmings, it is as effective as it is serviceable, its favour is not surprising.

The Louis Velveteen, from its wonderful resemblance to the richest Silk Velvet, is essentially a lady's material; the lights and shadows so thoroughly like those of Genoa and Lyons Velvet, the rich folds and graceful drapery, so soft and silky to the touch, all account easily for its great and permanent vogue among the aristocracy, both here and abroad.

Though very strong, it is so light in wear that even in elaborately made dresses, with long trains, it has no inconvenient weight; while from some peculiar and special arrangement of the pile, no amount of creasing will flatten or rub it; neither rain nor dust alter its rich colourings or dim the silky bloom for which it is so celebrated—advantages that cannot be too highly appreciated.

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Prices for Boys' Hard Wear—18. 1/2, 28. 6/4, 28. 11/4, 38. 6/4, and 38. 11/4, the yard.

New Colours, Checks, Stripes, and Plaidings, now ready. Specially prepared Royal Navy Serges, extra quality, 18. 1/2, the yard—the cheapest in the world. Splendid for Boys' and Girls' Suits and Dresses.

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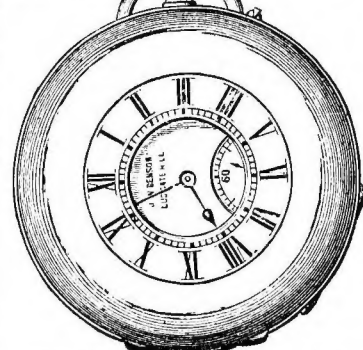
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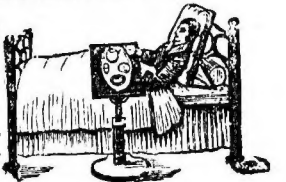


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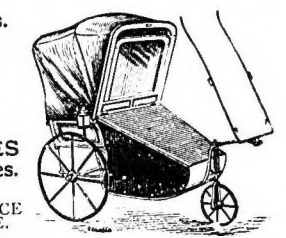
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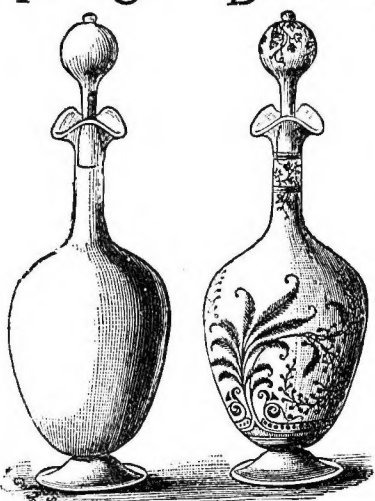
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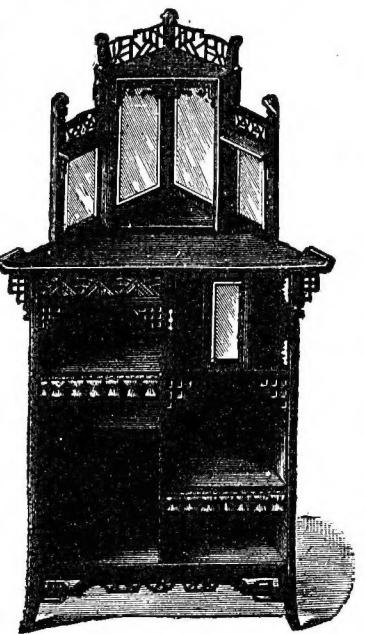
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